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CHRIST,  
THE ONLY SACRIFICE:  
OR  
THE ATONEMENT

IN ITS  
RELATIONS TO GOD AND MAN.

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BY NATHAN S. S. BEMAN, D. D.,  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

BY SAMUEL HANSON COX, D. D.,  
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~~~~~

ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?  
GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO  
HIMSELF—THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST AND THE JUSTI-  
FIER OF HIM THAT BELIEVETH IN JESUS.

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**SECOND EDITION.**

REVISED, RE-WRITTEN, ENLARGED, AND IMPROVED.  
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## DEDICATION.

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TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SYNODS, PRESBYTERS, SESSIONS and CHURCHES, of CONSTITUTIONAL PRESBYTERIANS, this treatise is affectionately inscribed by the author. This work is founded on a discussion published in FOUR SERMONS, some twenty years since, and which is now out of print; but it is enlarged, and, it is hoped, much improved. The form of Sermons has been exchanged for that of Chapters; and the subject matter contained in the second chapter, is entirely new. Other parts have been amended, and some entirely re-written.

From the frequent calls which have been made for this work, and the spirit of religious investigation which exists, at the present time, in this country, it is hoped, that this effort may exert an humble agency, at least, in establishing the minds of sincere inquirers, upon the solid rock of Bible truth. It is commended also to the candid perusal of the christian public, and the kind benediction of approving heaven.

NATHAN S. S. BEMAN.

TROY, JULY 1844.



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# INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

BY

SAMUEL HANSON COX, D. D.



CHRISTIANITY is a great circle, including time and eternity, this world and all other worlds, man and God, with the universe of their manifold relations and affinities and wonders, within the sweep of its infinite circumference; while its relative center is—Calvary, the scene of the crucifixion, the Son of God dying to make atonement for the sins of men. On this astonishing center that circle of immortality and glory depends; revolving about it, connected with it, tributary to it, and deriving from it, attraction, order, light, verdure, fruit, summer, life, and joy! What the solar system were without the sun, such analogously would be the evangelical system without Christ and his glorious atonement on the cross. How otherwise can we understand, in one grand aspect of the matter, the example of an inspired apostle, or show that the total christian ministry are always and sacredly obligated to imitate it, and are acting totally out of character when they omit it, no matter on what pretence of their own

wisdom, that is, their own folly ; the example of the blessed Paul, the Prince of the apostles of God, when he says, *God forbid that I should glory save IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world ; I determined not to know*, that is, not practically to recognize, ANY THING among you, save JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED : *we preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF GOD.*

Hear this, ye baptized infidels of christendom, perishing by thousands without hope ! hear it, ye idolatrous Romans, forgetting in your mass of abominations, and your ‘ host’ of impiety, that it is not the way of the Lord with repetition and routine, to *crucify him afresh and put him to an open shame*, systematically and by authority of the church, as if his *one offering* were not, self-sufficient and alone, the all-accomplished and the all-accomplishing expiation for our sins ; hear it, ye subverted and subverting Socinians, who *deny the Lord that bought you and bring upon yourselves swift destruction*, while ye propagate your specious but *damnable heresies* among deluded and misled hundreds of your christless hearers, perishing through the gilded and sweetened poison of your taking ministrations, performed so archly and so deceivingly, in your gorgeous edifices adorned with every thing but *the gospel of God our Savior* ; and hear it, all ye *neglecters of so great salvation*, since ye too must turn to it cordially, as your refuge and your resource, your all-sufficient and your only one—or, perish forever !

But especially, as the times are, hear it, O ye formal-

ists of Oxford and America, infecting, as your Romanizing errors progressively do, almost all the thousands of your superficial and dreamy clergy and other serfs of the hierarchical despotism in both hemispheres, hear it—read it—and inwardly digest, if ye are capable of this, a volume, of whose great theme it is your policy and your way to speak ‘with great reserve,’ and in effect to supersede or obscure it, till *another gospel, which is not* ANOTHER, and a pseudo-christianity which is not christianity, corrupts your piety, and deludes your hope, and infatuates your silly disciples; ponder a treatise, as well as peruse it, which is eminently adapted to set you right on all the grander radiations of the truth; which is wiser and better on the topic than any or all that has ever emanated from your theologically vile University, since the execrable LAUD corrupted it, two centuries ago, by making it after his own heart, and by infusing into it, ‘by authority’ or mandamus, that old virus of semi-paganism, which has, in its late revival, identified PUSEYISM with Laudean prelacy and priestcraft; here, we say to you, is a Book which you perishingly need, of more importance than all your late inventions, or creations and emissions, of religious fustian and soulless trash, a noble and appropriate TRACT FOR THE TIMES, that may well be recommended to all the patients of your present epidemic, in your large and gorgeous hospital, as an antidote to Puseyism, a catholicon against humanizing will-worship, against human authority in the church of God, and against a new basis of hope and piety—wofully different from that ONLY AND PEERLESS ONE, which God hath laid in Zion, THE ROCK OF AGES, identified in JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

But ye are learn'd ! In volumes deep you sit ;  
 In wisdom—shallow. Pompous ignorance !  
 Learn well to know how much need not be known,  
 And what that knowledge that impairs your sense.

*In him was life*, says John, AND THE LIFE *was* THE LIGHT *of men*. In this dense passage is taught us that in Christ is salvation, and that the salvation is the illumination of men ! We infer that he is an unfurnished casuist, a dangerous spiritual guide, and a weak or blind ethical philosopher, who does not, as his chief qualification, understand aright the doctrine of salvation in Christ—and no man does this any farther than he is wise in the doctrine of the cross, or, what is the same thing, truly and thoroughly understands the atonement. How vain and vapid then are the pretensions of learned spiritual quackery, the exterior pomp, cathedral, diocesan, liturgical, and ritual, which Chelsea, Oxford, and Rome, *Omnes in unum*, are devoutly enacting—to elaborate their own greater downfall in the judgment ! There is no excuse for them. God has given them fair warnings ; and their doom was spoken by the master especially in the these words—*Every plant which my Heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up*. AMEN, say we !

For proof that there positions and appeals are neither false, nor vain, nor other than *the truth as it is in Jesus*, we refer you, honest reader, to the following treatise on the great and glorious subject of the atonement. In the form of its first edition, inferior in several respects to the present, published about a quarter of a century ago, and now not to be found at the book stores, its ministry was eminently useful, both here and in Europe. We dare almost predict a career of

enlarged usefulness and favor for the forth-coming volume, beyond the example of its predecessor. We hail its appearance with devout salutation, commendation, and benediction ; as seasonable and serviceable, as suited to our times, and well adapted to do great good to our countrymen—especially those to whom it is in form and in heart solemnly dedicated by our author. To all Americans, who value the fame of the nation, and the church that preserves it, and therefore cherish the names of Edwards, Dwight, Griffin, and many living worthies of a faith discriminating, profound, demonstrative, and excellently kindred to theirs, we say, value also, and learn to appreciate, such pure and practical treasures and treatises, on grand theological truth, as you have this for an example ; and neither let this go abroad of necessity to find the wise men that first estimate correctly its worth, nor servilely wait till the theological princes of the three parent kingdoms of the British Islands, in their sermons and reviews, have lauded it, or have even felt its excellence, before your own fair sense, and intelligent christian honesty, have dared to pronounce on its merits and to do it justice. We ask for it the attention, the candor, and the well-digested perusal of its pages, by all intelligent Americans—from such honored names as that of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, to any one more obscure, but scarcely less capable—if his heart is right before God, and his mind gifted with the ordinary intelligence of our honest and respectable farmers, mechanics, merchants, and laborers : and if they are only wise enough to think that the truth—whatever it be—is good enough for any man, and that error is oppositely too bad for any man, we invoke and invite them, to study this precious little manual of principles and



illustrations, as no mean or ordinary production, on no common or trivial topic, but one with which supremely are identified the duties, the rights, and the interests of man, the authority and the glory of God, the good of our beloved country, the hopes of ages, the destiny of salvation, and the bliss of heaven.

Its author is an American, native, educated, characteristic, patriotic, and christian; and his work looks, first, for usefulness and beneficence, second, for appreciation and support, to his own beloved countrymen. Nor can it benefit any who do not appreciate it;—nor need we say that it cannot be appreciated, or felt, or known, without perusal! Read it, then. Its writer is at least honest. He devoutly believes what he says—as all know who know him. We also believe it; and for its substance, to say or think less about its form, we are not afraid reverently and in the name of God to announce that its theme is divine, its importance is infinite, its arguments are excellent, its method is clear and simple and appropriate, and its relation to human hope of immortal glory is at once essential, fundamental, identical! Its style is easy, demonstrative, agreeable; its logic, honest and sound; and its collective whole, worthy of the confidence and the cordiality, which in the name of souls and their divine Redeemer, we here claim for it.

The body of the work consists of five essays or chapters, ON THE ATONEMENT—*its necessity—its reality,—its nature,—its nature continued,—its extent.* These are plainly the grand affections or relations of the atonement; and we rejoice at the masterly, the select, the symmetrical, and the straight-forward manner, in which our author has despatched them.

On the necessity of atonement for sin, it seems in some way to be an instinct of the human conscience ! Who that knows what sin is, and shudders as he sees it rife and rampart in our world, and in our times so terribly if not increasingly prevalent, can help a terrified consciousness at the spectacle, around him and within him ! We are here reminded of examples among the very heathen to the same effect—and our classic readers will receive and value the citation of one, which to christian scholarship appears equally obvious and affecting and instructive—one that was written just before the Savior was born in the manger, and while the imperial and intellectual glories of the *Augustan age* were culminating in the early solstice of their sway, by the mighty pen of Horace.

Audiet cives acuisse ferrum,  
Quo graves Persæ melius perirent ;  
Audiet pugnās, vitio parentum  
Rara, juvenus.

Quem vocet Divûm populus ruentis  
Imperî rebus ? prece qua fatigent  
Virgines sanctæ minus audientem  
Carmina Vestam ?

CUI DABIT PARTES SCELUS EXPIANDI  
Jupiter ? Tandem venias, precamur,  
Nube candentes humeros amictus  
Augur Apollo.

A paraphrase of this or brief abstract we subjoin ; The sins of our citizens are multiplied. Civil war rages. The sword, that should pierce our enemies, now wastes our countrymen. Parents and children, in vice and suffering, perish together. The state, the very empire

is ruining. There is no help in man. What shall we do? What God can help us? Whom shall we invoke! Alas! our sins have alienated the divine favor. God will not hear our prayers. There must be SOME ADEQUATE EXPIATION for us! But wo to us, where shall it be found? To WHOM shall the Supreme God assign the mighty task of making the requisite atonement? Who is worthy, who is capable, of this? Alas! some deity alone must intervene and save us. As to the EXTENT of the atonement, we believe that it was *for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* Those in general who hold that theological system which is called generically *Calvinistic*, and who hold it perhaps with equal decision and sincerity in common, though palpably not with equal correctness in degree, are divided here, some holding the fulness of the atonement for all men; others, the limitation of its nature, as atonement, to all the finally saved. The issue is joined—and while human imperfection continues in the church, controversy will not cease to be the consequence. Any thing almost is better than stagnation and a dead calm; *just as a living dog is better than a dead lion.* Besides, if brethren would—as they could and as they ought—debate honestly and in a manly way, without acerbity or impeaching motives, or personalities of unkindness, why should it be deprecated or avoided? Such are the prejudice, the ignorance, the selfishness, and the indolence of poor human nature, and the miserable and guilty remains of these even in the faithful, that controversy often becomes necessary as the alternative of what is infinitely worse—dereliction of duty, truth, and hope! we therefore contend for the fulness of the atonement,

and with full conviction of what the truth is, as well as with liberal and kind feelings, but no servility or cowardice, towards those who differ from us. Indifference will not do, nor temporizing, nor ambiguity, nor tameness. Christ expects every one of his ministers to do his duty—and there is no alternative, no succedaneum, no evasion, to be endured. *As free, and not using our liberty for a CLOAK OF MALICIOUSNESS, but as the servants of God*, let us vindicate the truth, and look to its Great Author for our reward!

The government of God is properly two-fold—moral and providential; the one of duties, the other of events; the one referring to law, to right, to goodness, the other to the economics of the whole; and both ordered with sovereign wisdom and eternal prosperity and glory. In proportion as the partialities of the mind are found to incline more to events than to duties, more to destiny than to accountability, more to our passive than to our active relations, the providential department of God fills the field of vision; and because the event is, that the elect, and they only, are saved, therefore we are apt to think and to favor the theory that the others were in no sense the objects of mediatorial mercy. It suits our wisdom then, to think the atonement as perfectly limited in its nature as it is in its application—and we say Christ died for the elect alone. On the contrary, those who make room in their minds for the moral in the providential government of God, and see things as they are, find no difficulty, but the glorious reverse, in accrediting the fulness of the atonement.

Reasoning from facts to theories, and not from theories to facts, we ask, what are the revealed facts in the case? Is salvation in fact offered to the elect alone?

or to a part, and not to all ? to them that are saved only, or to them also that perish ? Is there any offer, not on the basis of atonement ? Is there any salvation to offer, save that of Christ ? Is it not offered to every hearer of the gospel ? Is it not commanded to be sped *in all the world and to every creature* ? Are not the neglecters and the rejecters of the gospel, guilty of rejecting or neglecting the *great salvation* of Christ ? Is not this their chief sin, and the allied or antecedent cause of all others ? Are they not mainly punished for this crime ? Is it not here by way of eminence incomparably the greatest of their offences against God, and so *THE condemnation* ? And if so, then—how much transcendental ingenuity must it require to reconcile these plain facts, with the theory that limits atonement, and all saving provisions in Christ, to the elect alone ! Does God offer what has no existence ? Or has he *another gospel which is not* ANOTHER for the non-elect ?

The two theories differ also in the order of the divine purposes. The limitarian scheme has it thus—apostacy ; election ; atonement for the elect alone ; punish all the others ; and accomplish the glorification of the elect. The true plan is—apostacy ; the mission and the atonement of Christ for the whole world ; the offer universal based on the atonement alone ; the universal neglect and practical contempt of it on the part of men ; election interposed to influence as many millions to accept it, as may consist with the practicabilities of the divine government in the case ; their glorification accomplished ; and the punishment of eternal justice executed on the others—mainly for the sin and the treason of rejecting Christ and his salvation offered to them.



But we refer to the volume of Dr. Beman for a discussion better suited to enlighten the reader ; merely premising here, that, if the Savior died, designedly and in a way peculiar, positively to save his own elect people, the question still remains, as a matter of revealed fact, did he in no sense die to save others also ? Are not others placed by his death in a state or in relations as salvable, that is, in which their salvation is just as practicable, really and absolutely, as were the whole world without such peculiar and positive design ? Does saving some through his blood, offered alike to all, prevent the others or any of them, from accepting it to their own salvation ? If it includes effectually HIS OWN, does this obstruct the way to others—or shut the ever-open door—or hinder, or other than facilitate and attract, the entrance of the others ? Atonement is one thing—the providential design to save definite millions by its means is another. The provision is ample, the remedy sufficient ; but it is actually apprehending and accepting it, that makes the essential difference : and if the piety of one is no obstacle, but only a facility to the piety of others, then the executed purpose of Christ, living, dying, rising, and reigning forever, to secure their piety and salvation, who are thus saved, is just the reverse of an obstacle, or prohibition, or exclusion, to others ; who perish not because some are saved, but because they exclude themselves ! He died indeed for his own peculiarly—but this is not the atonement, and not its limitation. The purpose of God is inclusive of his own, rather than exclusive of others. To urge, or influence some to enter an open door, where all are invited, with equal reality and equal sincerity, to enter, is no hindrance to others ! It is a facility rather, and

an increase of motives and means and helps to be resisted by others who *will not come*. The true nature of atonement as shown in this treatise, demonstrates this—and the Bible shows it so plainly, that it requires something like inquisitorial torture, or the allied tortuous hermeneutics of Socinianism, to make it speak a different language or to mystify its plenary and very intelligible meaning.

The fulness of the atonement is a grand and glorious truth; a rock impregnable, against which the surges of theory, and controversy, and prejudice, and party, have tossed and broke themselves for ages. But it is not so generally known or credited that the fulness of the atonement was held by CALVIN. That great and excellent man\* has been abused often, by

\* A very respectable divine of the restrictive sympathy, lately conversing on this topic with the writer, occasioned the following dialogue, given in abridged form substantially as it occurred, in the presence of several other clergymen.

RESTRICTIONIST. You gentlemen of the full atonement plan, err, in my judgment, mainly because you so little or ill understand the science of interpretation.

PLENIST. That is strange. The divines of our way seem to have been the greatest and most distinguished in that department, both here and in Europe. Look at Barnes, Stuart, Dwight, and most of the divines of New England. Look at Jay, Raffles, Morison, Wardlaw, at Newton, Fuller, Hall, and in past ages, Doddridge, Watts, Howe, Baxter, and others back to CALVIN!

R. Oh! you misunderstand them, just as you do the Bible. General expressions such as *the world, every man, all men*, and so forth, are not to be taken literally in every case.

P. Neither are they in every case to be restricted. *God so loved the world.*—

some who had neither the sense, nor the candor, nor the learning, to understand him.

It is rather surprising to see certain *limitarians* sometimes arrogate to themselves, at least by implication, the honor of exclusive *Calvinism*, as well as exclusive orthodoxy. They are certainly in an error there, if what *Calvin* believed and taught may be viewed as the criterion of what *Calvinism* is. In his *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*, written

R. Yes the elect world.—

P. Well—"that he gave his only begotten son [for the elect world.]—

R. Right, you are improving now as an interpreter.

P. Let me see—that *whosoever* [of the elect world] *believeth in him*—but, where are the others of the elect world? those infidel elect—are THEY saved in infidelity by the powers of election? or how? *whosoever* is a partitive, and implies each of a class as distinct from those of another class. *Whosoever* of the elect?

R. Oh! sir, you are too ultra in your views.—

P. Come we then to Calvin. He says that "Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world.—

R. Yes—of the elect.—

P. And by the benignity of God he is offered indifferently to all men.—

R. That is, to all of the elect.—

P. We shall see; his next words are—"all men, however, do not apprehend him." If that means "all of the elect" do not, the proposition is plainly false, as we both believe. I must say, my brother, that you seem not to be the man, to fault others for defects in the science of interpretation. It is plain that both the Bible and Calvin are against you, while you restrict both in your impracticable scheme, by a way that I could not call an example of the SCIENCE of interpretation.

S. H. C.

(when about 25 years of age) in his theological youth, although they were less express on the point than his subsequent writings, I recollect no sentence which determines any thing in favor of restrictive views of the nature of atonement. In his COMMENTARY, which was his maturer work and the rich mine whence many modern writers have taken their second-hand wisdom, and which has never (so far as I know) been rendered into *English* and published, his sentiments are full, frequent, conclusive, in favor of a full atonement. It may be well to transcribe a few of these. I could easily give more.

1 John ii.2, where Christ is said to be "the propitiation—for the sins of the whole world." Calvin says indeed, that "he would not stoop to answer the ravings of those who hence declare all the reprobate and even the devil himself to be the ultimate subjects of salvation. A position so monstrous deserves no refutation. But others, who have no such purpose, affirm that *Christ suffered sufficiently for all men; but efficiently for the elect alone.* And this solution of the matter is commonly received in the schools. I question however its relevancy to the present passage, while I confess its absolute truth." Hence (1) Calvin believed the fulness of the atonement, and made it a part of his christian confession. (2) Just as obviously is it no modern speculation; since it had *obtained in the schools* of protestant orthodoxy, even *commonly*, three hundred years ago. I subjoin his own words. Sed hic movetur quaestio, quomodo mundi totius peccata expientur. Omitto phreneticorum deliria, qui hoc praetextu reprobos omnes, adeoque Satanam ipsum in salutem admittunt: tale portentum refutatione indignum est. Qui

hanc absurditatem volebant effugere, dixerunt ; Sufficiens pro toto mundo passum esse Christum : sed pro electis tantum efficaciter. Vulgo haec solutio in scholis obtinuit. Ego quanquam verum esse illud dictum fateor ; nego tamen præsentì loco quadrare.

2 Pet. ii. 1. " Even denying the Lord that bought them." He says—" those therefore who despising restraint, have abandoned themselves to all licentiousness, are deservedly said to deny Christ by whom they were redeemed. Moreover, that the doctrine of the gospel may remain safe and entire in our hands, let us fix it in our minds that we have been redeemed by Christ to this very end—that HE may be at once the Lord of our life and our death : and so let us propose to ourselves this end, that to him we may live, and to him we may die." His words are—Qui igitur excusso freno in omnem licentiam se projiciunt, non immerito dicuntur Christum abnegare a quo redempti sunt. Proinde ut salva et integra evangelii doctrina apud nos maneant, hoc animis nostris infixum sit, redemptos esse nos a Christo ut vitae simul et mortis nostræ sit Dominus : itaque nobis hunc finem esse propositum ut illi vivamus ac moriamur.

Rom. v. 18. " Therefore, as by one offence [sentence came] upon all men unto condemnation, so by the righteousness of one [sentence came] upon all men unto justification of life." Stuart's translation. Calvin says, " The apostle here makes it the common grace of all, because to all it is exhibited, though to all it is not realized in eventual fact. For although Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and to all without discrimination is he offered by the benignity of God, yet all men do not apprehend him." His

words are—*Communem omnium gratiam facit, quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa : nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter Dei benignitate offertur, non tamen omnes apprehendunt.*

Matt. xxvi. 28. "For this is my blood of the New Testament, [covenant,] which is shed for many for the remission of sins." He says, "Under the word *many* Jesus Christ designates not a part of the world only, but the total human race. Therefore, when we approach the table of the Lord, not only should this general thought occur to our mind, that the world has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but each for himself ought to consider that his own sins have been expiated." I give his words. Sub *multorum* nomine non partem mundi tantum designat, sed totum humanum genus. Ergo dum ad suam mensam accedimus, non solum haec generalis cogitatio in mentem veniat, redemptum Christi sanguine esse mundum; sed pro se quisque reputet peccata sua expiata esse.

In modern technology, which I approve, they only are said to be *redeemed* who are actually accepted in Christ: for all, atonement is made; to all it is offered; the Spirit striving through the truth as extensively, as the sufficiency and applicability of the atonement are extensive. Still, to accept the offer and correspond with the offerer, is, in the very nature of things, the only way to be saved. Are all men saved? Yes—if all repent and believe the gospel! Do they this? He that believes men are saved *in sin*, or that all men renounce it, must have very strong faith! We however do not believe that the atonement was INDEFINITE in the sense of the *Remonstrants of Holland* or any other



*Arminians.* God had a design in making it, which no event should frustrate. Christ eternally designed the salvation of the elect ; and for these, in this sense *exclusively*, he gave his precious life. But this makes not the atonement less full, or alters its nature at all. When THE ELECT are all brought to piety and heaven, by supposition, THE OTHERS—whoever they are—have just as good an opportunity every way to realize the same blessedness, as all the world have on the theory that denies election. Election is one thing, atonement another. Election is all gain and no loss—and the reverse precisely is true of the error that denies election. See John vi. 36—40, 44, 65. x. 11, 15, 26—30. xvii. 2. Eph. v. 25—27. Rev. xvii. 8. Matt. xxv. 34. Rom. ix. 29.

The gospel ought to be offered to all, and pressed powerfully on each to accept it. Its offers, though made ministerially by men, are made morally by God himself. And is this a fact? Is it divine reality? What an intrinsic and perfect proof of its consistency, its sincerity, its adaptation, its trust-worthiness, and the infinite obligation there devolved on men to accept it! men are not machines, but moral agents. They are not passive receivers, but active architects—under God—of their own destiny. Till they accept the salvation of Christ, they do nothing acceptable to God—they are not forgiven—they are fit neither to die nor to live—they may enjoy pleasure, but they are strangers to happiness—they are blinded and deceived by their own hearts and the devices of the devil—and they are growing worse and worse, more and more criminal, and with less and less probability that they will ever return and be saved.



The Westminster Assembly of divines are very far from excluding the non-elect, any farther than they exclude themselves by their voluntary neglect or rejection of the gospel. In answer to the sixty-seventh question of the Larger Catechism, on EFFECTUAL CALLING, they well and wisely say—"All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the spirit; who, for THEIR WILFUL NEGLECT AND CONTEMPT OF THE GRACE OFFERED TO THEM, being justly left in their unbelief, DO NEVER TRULY COME TO JESUS CHRIST." Now, we inquire, Is this offered grace founded on the atonement, or not? If not, what basis has it, and what kind of 'grace' is it? If it is, then there is provision for all men in the atonement—Q. E. D.—or, the offer can be made on another basis, which is not atonement; and if so, how are Socinians so wrong in the matter, who disown and deny all such basis?

If the offer of salvation can be divinely made to sinful man not on the basis of atonement, then why might it not be realized to him in the same way? If the one may consist with the moral government of Jehovah, why not both? The offer implies all, and the reality enjoys no more. Here then we come to the charmed precincts of infidelity and pandemonium, and it is not being farcically *quasi* baptized that can make such principles sound or safe, for SOCINIANS *ex professo*, or for us by witless implication. The plain fact is that the atonement is full; that it is the real basis of every offer of God; that every man is supremely bound to accept it; and that the philanthropy of God is none

the less full-orbed, luminous, sincere, and rich in glory, because men doubt it, cavil at it, reject it, and so often perish forever.

Nor are we here unmindful of the Spirit's influence, which is always exerted through his own truth, in it, by it, for it ; never against it, never without it. We are aiming wisely to subserve that precious influence, in all this volume, and in all our other ministrations, *not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but, BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* The views of many preachers touching this influence, and their own way of presenting them, are often most remarkably absurd and technically dark and confounding ; away from the wisdom of the spirit, away from the examples of prophets and apostles. Is it not the best way to present the truth, to do it for the substance just as it is done in the volume of inspiration? to view that influence as coincident with the truth, subservient to the truth, potential by the truth, and triumphant in the truth? Only so far as the truth of the Spirit affects the human mind, perceiving, approving, accepting, and loving it, is the mind, or can it be, genuinely under the influence of the spirit. What a powerful motive to preachers, to *make full proof of their ministry*, to be bold and aggressive, affectionate and earnest, faithful and wise, urgent and patient, in their holy and sublime vocation ! Thus their work becomes appropriately, *the ministration of righteousness and the ministration of the spirit.*

In the conclusion, hoping great things from the career of this little volume, and praying for them, we affectionately implore our brethren of the views here called RESTRICTIVE in distinction from our own, and

for whose great and learned respectability, as well as honesty and piety, we entertain the most cordial and candid regard, we fraternally implore them to read it—not as polemics, not as partisans, not as prejudiced or committed zealots. The day is coming when all our *wood, hay, and stubble*, shall be impartially burnt. We have no interest in rearing a combustible pile on the rock of ages.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again ;  
The eternal days of God are hers :  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies amid her worshippers.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE NECESSITY OF ATONEMENT.

THERE are, as far as we know, but two distinct methods by which God reveals himself, or discloses his character and perfections, to rational creatures. One is by the principles and practical operation of the moral Law, and the other by the new and entirely different dispensation called the Gospel. There is of course no reference here to those revelations of the divine will which are made in the works of nature, or in the dispensations of providence,—though it would not be difficult, it is apprehended, to show that all these are but parts, in their practical influence, either of the law or the gospel. The present, however, is purely a question of revelation, and the limits of this discussion must be defined and restricted by the Bible. In the law, God, the supreme Legislator, has annexed life or eternal happiness, to perfect and uninterrupted obedience. By the wise and equitable awards of this law the angels participate the bliss of heaven. They feel its raptures, and swell its endless songs, because they have never violated, but always fully obeyed, this divine rule of moral action. By the same perfect rule

our first parents were happy for a time on earth, and they and all their posterity would have been raised to a triumphant immortality, had sin never entered our system, and deranged and poisoned the human heart. But to the transgressor, whoever he may be, or what world soever he may inhabit, the moral law is the ministration of death! It speaks terror to the conscience now, and where pardon is not obtained—of which the law makes no mention—its accents will wax more and more fearful through unwasting and endless ages. This is the certain effect, the sure and settled consequence, of being abandoned to the penal action of the law of God. Like Jehovah's arm, the recorded penalty, in such a case as this,—that is, where pardon does not intervene on some other ground distinct from that of law, cannot, and will not bend. We might as well expect that God himself would change, as that one jot or tittle of his law, under a purely legal administration, should fail.

It is the Gospel alone that provides and publishes a remedy for human transgression; and in this system of grace and recovery for a fallen world the doctrine of the atonement is fundamental. So numerous, and so important, and so vital, are the relations of this doctrine, in the gospel plan, that if you annihilate the one, you annihilate the other also. If you blot out the atonement, you blot out the grand and stupendous outlines, and the essential filling up of the system of grace, and you have nothing left that deserves the name. There is no way, so far as we can discover, in which God, in accordance with the acknowledged principles of the divine law, can forgive the sinner and restore him to favor.

The apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, has

presented a clear and masterly view of this subject in connection with the Jewish economy. The ninth and tenth chapters bear directly on this point and are worthy of special consideration. He explains with great force and perspicuity, the typical import of those rites which were enjoined by the law of Moses, and particularly of those appointed sacrifices whose blood was considered essential to the forgiveness of sin. He expressly declares, that, "without shedding of blood is no remission." The principle here asserted will be found, on critical examination, to be invested with an amazing practical importance. It lies at the foundation of moral government, and must commend itself to every reflecting mind. The subject under discussion is the ritual law, or the Jewish sacrifices. These numerous observances which were enjoined under the Mosaic dispensation, teach us, by divinely appointed symbols, the doctrine of the atonement. Reject this interpretation, and it is a task embarrassed with more than ordinary difficulties to fix upon any other which would not appear either extravagant, or puerile. It is a fact well known, that, from age to age, victims bled on Jewish altars,—and the extent to which the same religious rites have prevailed among other nations, not favored by any distinct revelation from God, would seem to indicate, that the doctrine of *substitution* is admitted with great facility by the human mind. Or should it be said, as is most probably true, that the heathen borrowed their religious sacrifices from the patriarchs, or other remote progenitors of our race, then, this fact, were it conceded, would only show the wonderful tenacity with which the doctrine of substituted sufferings, indicated in sacrifices, is cherished by



man, through all moral changes, and in all external conditions, when almost the last fragment of the true religion, originally given by revelation and then left to the uncertainties of tradition, has perished amidst the oblivion of ages. One circumstance should not be forgotten, or overlooked. In all these sacrifices whether Jewish or Pagan, the shedding of blood, or the taking of life, was deemed an essential element. In that part of the Epistle already quoted, the apostle treats of the ritual or ceremonial law, *in extenso*. He represents it as the gospel in type or shadow, and the offerings which were enjoined by that law derived all their efficacy from Jesus Christ, who, in the fulness of time, would appear in our world, and "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Under this law, or the typical dispensation, the victim was slain, or his blood was shed, and through this expressive ceremony, prefiguring "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,*" pardon, restoration and eternal life were offered to dying men.

*Almost all things, says one Apostle, were by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.* The law here spoken of, it should be remembered, is not the moral, but the ceremonial law, and this was nothing more nor less than the gospel of Christ expressed in symbols. Under that dispensation, as well as under the present, there could be no forgiveness of sin, without the shedding of blood,—under the former without the shedding of the blood of the typical sacrifice which was an emblem or symbol of Christ, and under the latter, without shedding the blood of Christ himself, from whom the ceremonial or legal sacrifice derived its saving power. That the declara-



tion of the apostle already cited, taken in its appropriate relations, and expounded in its legitimate import, teaches the necessity of an atonement to the forgiveness of sin, cannot be even with plausibility denied ;—indeed it would not seem possible to prove, that the passage admits of any other rational construction.

But without entering, in this place, upon a minute examination of the structure of the apostle's argument or multiplying, as might easily be done, references to the Bible in proof of this doctrine, the attention of the inquirer after truth will be directed, in this chapter, to a single point, namely, the necessity of an atonement for sin to the pardon and restoration of fallen man ; and this discussion will occupy the broad ground both of Scripture and of human reason.

#### THE NECESSITY OF AN ATONEMENT.

It is of no small importance, in this place, to premise, that incorrect and false reasons are sometimes assigned in support of a true position ; and this is, perhaps, more frequently met with in religion, than in any thing else. It has been so in relation to the doctrine of the atonement ; and it is often necessary to efface the scribblings of error from the minds even of christians, before the fair lines of truth can be clearly and distinctly written upon them.

Few doctrines of revelation have furnished more fruitful topics of controversy, in the church, than that of the atonement ; and it may be added, with equal truth, that this doctrine has sometimes been misunderstood and mis-stated by its warm advocates, as well as

by its decided opponents. One fruitful source of misapprehension, in relation to this subject, is the very common fault of putting a literal construction on the figurative language which is frequently employed in the Bible in discussions pertaining to this great transaction. The nature of these figurative representations will be more particularly considered in a future chapter of this treatise. It may be sufficient, in the present connection to remark, that some would appear at least to intimate, that the atonement was a kind of consideration, or stipulated price paid by Jesus Christ for the purpose of inclining God to exercise mercy towards our guilty and sin-ruined world. If this is not their sentiment, certain it is, that the language they employ very naturally admits of this construction. The representation of the matter, in their theory, is something like this : God had, in the moral law which has been violated, threatened the transgressor with eternal punishment, and till the whole amount of suffering due to him according to the just awards of the law, be inflicted on his *substitute*, God feels no compassion for him as a rebel,—cherishes no disposition to save him. The debt—the whole debt—must be legally paid, and then the prisoner of the law may be released ; the ransom, the literal ransom, must be offered and accepted, and then the divine commiseration for the captive of sin and death, which may reach his redemption, may be entertained, cherished, and expressed.

This view of the necessity of an atonement would forever annihilate the divine attribute of mercy. But this point will not be fully illustrated, and need not be insisted on for the present. It will be resumed when *the nature* of the atonement shall come under considera-

tion. That God was as much inclined to have mercy on our world without an atonement as with it, provided at the same time it could be done with equal moral propriety and with equal safety to his moral government, certainly accords with the decisions of common sense and with the great outlines of biblical truth. The atonement was in no respect the exciting cause of mercy to the sinner, but was simply the means selected by infinite wisdom for the expression of this mercy, without the sacrifice of a great practical moral principle, and of the moral government of God. The existence of the attribute of mercy was, like God himself, eternal : and no new and super-added motive was necessary in order to elicit this attribute in action. The atonement operated not as a bribe, or reward, or original cause, influencing the divine feelings ; not as a moral persuasive to the exercise of compassions hitherto unfelt ; but it opened a channel in which existing affections might freely flow ; and, at the same time, it rendered the pardon and salvation of the sinner consistent with every principle of the divine government—and every attribute of the divine nature. In one word, the atonement was not the procuring cause of mercy, but it was the mode in which mercy was to find for itself an illustrious expression in the system of the gospel.

But the atonement was necessary as both a symbolical and substantive expression of God's regard for the moral law. The intrinsic value, and the practical importance of this law, can not have escaped the observation of any intelligent and reflecting mind. It is a rule of moral action, in every respect adapted to the circumstances and the government of a rational universe. It is absolutely perfect as law. Under its be-

nign and holy influence, all heaven is full of happiness : and were its authority universally revered, and its precepts invariably obeyed, the constituents of the same felicity would be found everywhere, and heaven would become co-extensive with the existence of rational beings. It would acquire the ubiquity of God himself. But for the violations of this law, man would have stood, to this day, on the high summit of his primeval excellence ; and devils would still have been angels of light. Darkness would not have brooded on the face of the earth, nor the fires of wrath have been kindled in the bosom of hell. Every part of the universe would have continued to bloom and smile like Eden, and songs of gladness would have ascended from teeming millions, through countless and unwasting ages. Every place would have been heaven.

Both the precept and the penalty of the moral law, are infinitely excellent. Its demands and sanctions are just what they should be. These are what God approves ; and they embody those moral principles which tend to promote the harmony and happiness of intelligent beings. So perfect is this rule of action, that where there is no transgression, there can be no suffering. All natural evil, or misery, in the universe, is the consequence in some way, of moral evil or sin. The penalty of the moral law, too, is just as necessary and important as the precept ; and the regard which God cherishes for the former, will be the precise measure of that regard which he cherishes for the latter. His love for the precept of the law will be commensurate with the amount of good which its practical operation, when cordially obeyed, is intended and adapted to produce : and his love for the penalty will ever bear an exact

proportion to the practical evils which result from transgression. As the evils of disobedience on the one hand, correspond, in quantity, with the good secured by obedience, on the other, the divine affections will cling, with equal strength, to the penalty and the precept of the law. In one word, God ~~leaves~~ the whole law, comprising both the preceptive and the penal enactments, as he loves himself, or as he loves the order and happiness of the rational universe. There can be, in the nature of the case no other measure or rule, touching this point, by which the divine mind must regulate its decisions, forever principled in rectitude.

It would seem that this regard or affection of God for the moral law, renders an atonement necessary to the salvation of the sinner. Man has violated the precept of this law, and he is, consequently, exposed to its penalty. This position will not be controverted by theologians of any class,—not even by Unitarians themselves. In his treatment of men, God must take sides either with the law, or with the transgressor. Indifference or neutrality, when such vast interests as these are at stake, would be impossible. Should he receive the sinner into favor, notwithstanding the violated precept and the impending penalty of the law, it would afford a sad indication, that he had abandoned this rule of moral action; and in the case of man, thus received to favor, the transgressor of the law would stand on the same ground occupied by those who have never broken it or trampled on the authority of God. Such a course, it is perfectly obvious, would imply an abandonment of the whole moral law. In such a case, God would say, by a public act, an act that intelligent worlds would witness, and which stands connected



with a train of endless consequences, that he is willing, without an explanation given or reason assigned, to wave the preceptive requirement,—and set aside the penal-sanction of his own perfect rule of moral action.

That God actually cherishes that strong affection for the law which is here ascribed to him, must be evident from the general principles stated in the Bible, and from the nature of the case. This law is but a part of himself. It is the breathing of his own heart. It is an index of his own feelings in relation to spiritual acts. It is an outward expression of his cherished and eternal regard for the harmony and happiness of moral worlds and moral agents. It is God himself embodied in a precept which expresses what he approves and intends to reward, and in a penalty which expresses what he condemns and intends to punish. In his treatment of sinners there are but two ways in which he can continue to give evidence of his adherence to this rule of his own adoption, of his living and perpetual regard for this index or expression of his own nature. One is by executing the penalty, in its original import, its full force, and without mitigation, on every transgressor; and the other is, by requiring such an atonement for sin as shall answer in the moral government of God, the same purpose intended to be secured by the infliction of the threatened curse. Should the former course be pursued, every individual of our race must perish for ever. There would be no other distinction between the condition of fallen angels and fallen men than what might arise from their respective natures or their gradations in the intelligent system. That deep and heavy curse which consigns the race, living spirit to eternal death, would fall on men as it fell on sinning angels,

without discrimination and without hope. This point is so clear as a principle of law, that it would seem a needless sacrifice of time to institute a formal argument to prove it, especially in the light of the opened Bible.

From these positions, and from this course of reasoning, one of the following things must be true :—either that God may continue to cherish a supreme regard for the moral law, and condemn the sinner for ever ; or that he may secure the sinner by sacrificing the honor and authority of the law ; or that he may still love the law with undiminished and everlasting affection, and at the same time, restore and save the sinner, provided such an atonement should be made and accepted as would answer every purpose which could be effected by the literal and proper execution of the penalty originally threatened. Just so important and so necessary then, as it is, that God should cherish in his own infinite mind, and express, in the external movements of his providence, a supreme regard for his own good and perfect law, that bright image of himself, just so important and so necessary is it, that he should require an atonement as the grand preliminary measure, and as the accomplished and the appropriate and the honored medium, in the pardon and salvation of sinners.

The atonement was farther necessary to evince the divine determination to punish sin, or to execute the penalty of the law, or to maintain the law. The penalty of the moral law which is the second death, or death eternal is expressive of the divine displeasure against sin. It is the rule by which that displeasure is graduated. Sin is that hateful thing with which God can have no communion. Its malignity stands in direct opposition to the divine benevolence, and it must be



held in perfect and eternal abhorrence. This fact has been indicated and published in the penalty of the law ; a penalty, which, like its precept, and like its author, is *holy, and just, and good*. The curse of this law was annexed by God himself, and it was at the time of its promulgation, and ever will be expressive of his own moral feelings. It makes the strength and intensity of his hatred of sin. It is the moral scale by which every intelligent mind must graduate his affection for holiness. It is the index upon the great dial of the universe, which marks his steady and unwavering regard for the intellectual and moral system.

The penalty of the law is contained in such passages as these : *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. The soul that sinneth it shall surely die.* In the case of the sinner who is saved, it is evident that these threatenings are not literally or properly executed. Now suppose the sinner had been taken out of the hands of the law and shielded from its penalty, without the adoption of any measures on the part of God, to change the moral relations of that sinner ; without any expression of the divine feelings towards the transgression which should evince to other moral beings, that God remains immutably attached to the principles of the law ; without any atonement which should come in the place of the literal execution of the penalty ; and what evidence could we have that God is not mutable and weak, fallible in his ways ; or, that he still regards, not only the preceptive requirement, but the penal sanction of this law with approbation, and is determined to execute the threatened curse upon the wanton

transgressor? The act which should save the sinner in these circumstances, would leave the penalty of the law and the law itself a dead letter. It would introduce infinite confusion and absolute ruin into the moral government of God. It would be an act of violence to the equitable sanction of the law, in as much as it would forcibly wrest the criminal from the hands of justice, exempt him from punishment and restore him to peculiar favor. As no reason would appear to the universe, in this case, why God should thus interfere between the penalty of the law and the transgressor, the salvation of the sinner in these relations and circumstances, would furnish no doubtful testimony, that the feelings of God had changed in relation to sin and the penalty of the law; or that the law had never been the true index of his feelings, and the proper exponent of his moral nature, in relation to these cardinal points of his government. There could be no certainty in this case, that he ever would punish; or, that any threatened evil ever would be inflicted; or, that any threatening of his law ever was sincere and real and equitable in his sight. The consequence would be the prostration of all law and government, and the introduction of a wide-spread and wasting anarchy. Desolation would sweep over the fair face of the moral world and through the total moral universe, and no hand could stay or repair the universal ruin.

If the moral law, with its awful and eternal sanctions, was ever necessary to the welfare of the rational and moral system, it must always continue to be so; and God as the supreme Governor, must so conduct all his movements whether of justice or of mercy, as to leave on the minds of dependant creatures, a deep and

just impression, that the penalty of the law will be executed, and that the sinner must perish. To fix this impression indelibly on the heart of the sinner, is the object of the atonement ; and no measure of the divine government, no sacrifice of blood and treasure, which does not perfectly secure this object, can open the door of hope and life to a sin-stricken and lost world, in the dominions of the governor of righteousness.

But the necessity of an atonement will further appear evident, if we contemplate this doctrine in its relations to the universe, or its practical influence on moral and immortal beings. All the acts of God, as the moral Governor, must necessarily be public, and are intended to make a deep and durable impression on all rational creatures as the necessary subjects of his government. Moral beings, or responsible agents, are governed by motives, and the most powerful and efficient of these motives, especially those which relate to the formation of a correct moral character, and the production, continuance, or increase of holiness, have some vital connection with the government of God ; that is, with his public administration. We may very naturally suppose that it was the design or purpose of God, in saving sinners, to make a deep and grand impression on the universe ; and the propriety and necessity of an atonement may be triumphantly established by tracing the different and opposite effects which would probably be produced upon intelligent beings by the salvation of man either with or without a propitiation or sacrifice for their sins. Let the practical operation of the two systems, the one embracing and the other excluding the atonement be compared.

What effect would the salvation of sinners, without

an atonement, probably have upon the angels of heaven? Aside from the plan of redemption, they know God principally through the medium of the moral law. They feel the spirit, and comprehend the principles of this law much more perfectly than we do, or are capable of doing, in the present world. They have always been accustomed to view this law as perfect, both in its precept and penalty; and they have, no doubt, ever associated with disobedience the certain and eternal curse of God. In the history of their fellow angels, who once shone as radiant morning stars, side by side with them, in the highest heavens, they have seen the first act of sin followed by instantaneous and everlasting exclusion from the abodes of light and peace. This example is known and felt; and it must have taught them to revere the principles of the law, and to expect with a fearful certainty, the infliction of the penalty on every transgressor. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die*, speaks not only in the recorded penalty of the law, but it now echoes through wide heaven, in its execution, in tones as loud and solemn as an act of God can speak. Every angel receives an impression from this act; and while he dreads, with a new sensation, the penalty, he clings more closely to the precept of the law. Thus the moral power, the practical influence of straightforward and even-handed justice, is known and felt in heaven. But suppose the provisions of this law were entirely set aside in our world, as would be the case if sinful man were to be saved without an atonement, and what impression would this act probably make upon the angels of God? There would be in the treatment of apostate angels and apostate men, two opposite and conflicting acts in relation to the infractions of the same

law ; and the mystery involved in these acts, the most exalted spirits in heaven, could never comprehend or solve ! They could have no evidence, that God would, in any instance, punish the sinner by inflicting the penalty of the law. Their personal observation of the divine conduct, in relation to this point, is limited to two facts or examples ; in the former, the sentence was executed ; in the latter, according to the supposition, the transgressor was shielded from the threatened and impending curse. To them no reason appears why the conduct of God, in the one case, should be different from his conduct in the other. The final impression which would be made upon their minds by these facts would be, that God may or may not execute the penalty of the violated law upon the sinner.—Such a course of conduct would be calculated to shake the very confidence of angels in the government of God, and to prostrate his authority even in the empire of heaven. The very pillars of his throne would be shaken by the influence of such conflicting facts as these.

But the angels are not the only creatures concerned in this business. Men are the inspectors of the divine conduct, and their opinions of the character of God, must be essentially influenced by the manner in which sinners are saved ; and not their opinions only, but their moral character also, may be affected by the divine conduct in this particular. Even redeemed man, if his salvation were effected without a propitiation for sin, on comparing his condition as an heir of glory with the penalty of the law which might have been inflicted upon him, and which he deserved to feel, would be thrown into utter doubt, uncertainty and confusion. He must consider his salvation as brought about in



direct opposition to the principles of the law—in apparent, if not manifest, defiance of the threatened curse ; and, with all his veneration for the divine character, he could not vindicate, even to his own satisfaction, and perhaps much less to the satisfaction of others, the divine conduct in this act. The most which could be said, by way of apology, would be, that in this instance, mercy had triumphed over justice. In a private individual this might be considered an amiable weakness,—but in a judge, even upon a human tribunal, it would be deemed a sacrifice of principle—and in the moral governor of the universe, it must involve a direct contradiction of his former declarations contained in the prescribed rule, and consequently evince, as far as creatures could determine, a diminution of hatred for sin and a loss of affection for the penalty of the law. And if these might be the reflections of a redeemed sinner, what would probably be the reflections of an impenitent sinner ? It would be impossible to make him credit the fact, that the threatening of the law would be inflicted on any. It would inspire universal unbelief. And when condemned, in the day of judgment, the wicked would not be constrained to close their lips in eternal silence, as will be the case under the operation of that moral system which includes an atonement for the sins of men. All this must appear plain and palpable, even to an ordinary understanding.

Apply the same process of reasoning to the fallen angels. That there are such beings, is a fact which rests on no doubtful authority ; the Bible has distinctly revealed it. These creatures possessed of superior and comprehensive intellect, and of deep and dark malignity of heart, and constituting a part of God's moral

empire, would, no doubt, be thrown into equal perplexity, by the salvation of man without a propitiation for sin. In their own case, the penalty of the law was executed without delay—upon a part of the human family, in the process of time, the same penalty is inflicted, while another part of this sinful family are shielded from the curse, received into favor, and eventually taken home to heaven. Now let all this be done without an atonement, and, in the estimation of fallen angels, you create war between God and his own eternal law. You make his public and solemn acts—acts on which are suspended eternal consequences—opposite and contradictory, and irreconcilable to each other. You render him, at least, apparently mutable and capricious, in his feelings towards the law, and destitute, in his treatment of offenders, of a fixed and settled rule of moral conduct.

But let an atonement intervene, such an atonement as will be described in a future chapter, and this darkness which would otherwise hang around the divine administrations, and these perplexities which assail different orders of intelligent and moral beings, and which no finite mind could solve, are dissipated at once. It is on Calvary that justice consents to the exercise of mercy. The death of Christ, so far as the honor of the divine law and the dignity of the divine government are concerned, has become a complete substitute for the death of the sinner ; and no practical principle of law or government, is now sacrificed in his salvation. If the penalty of the law is not literally executed, certain purposes have been attained, and certain interests have been secured by the atonement, as will hereafter be seen, which will place the moral govern-



ment of God on higher and more solid ground than could have been done by the infliction of the curse upon the sinner himself. This the angels of heaven already see. This the redeemed sinner feels, and will continue to feel amid the songs and raptures of his eternal state. This is, no doubt, understood by apostate angels; and this will be comprehended and acknowledged by sinners from our world, who, by the rejection of the gospel, shall hereafter become their companions in the world of deep and endless despair. When fully instructed in those principles which are included in the moral system of the gospel the universe of virtuous mind will entertain but one sentiment, and lift up but one voice through the ages of eternity.

From this brief view of the necessity of an atonement to the salvation of men, and from the fact, that an atonement every way adapted to the circumstances of the case, has been made, which has been incidentally mentioned, rather than formally proved, in this place, we are very naturally led to contemplate its practical influence upon the feelings of our own hearts. The object of divine truth, in all its disclosures, is moral effect. It should mould the spirit, and govern the life. God has revealed truth for this purpose, and man in presenting it to others should become, in this respect, an humble imitator of God. We are very naturally, and almost necessarily led by this discussion to contemplate our own peculiar obligations to God for providing an atonement for our guilty world.

The condition of the human family, as sinners, without an atonement, may be easily discovered in connection with the foregoing train of thought. If nothing had been contrived or executed, on the part of God, to

change the moral relations of sinners, their condition would be precisely that which is contemplated and pointed out by the law. This law makes but a single demand, that is perfect obedience ; and if that be withheld, it points out no course, it prescribes no alternative, but the execution of the penalty. It makes no compromise with the transgressor—it proposes no terms of accommodation—it publishes no overtures of peace.—These things are no part of the legal enactment. This law continues to require obedience—and it must inflict eternal punishment for want of a full and cheerful compliance with this demand. All men are transgressors of the moral law, and, by the terms of this law, all men must perish for ever. From this condition, no creature can deliver us. Our own efforts cannot change our relations to the law—and even angels, were they to embark in our favor, could render us no essential service. This work transcends all created power. The law must go on to inflict that death which it threatens, unless God himself provide a remedy. No being can do it, but the author of the law. And no expedient can furnish a remedy, except one which shall answer the same purpose as the execution of the penal threatening. This expedient, or provision, is to be found in the atonement made by Jesus Christ. It is by this atonement, that the condition of men is made to differ from the condition of devils. While the latter are given up to the punitive operation of the law, the former are placed under a dispensation of mercy, through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel, and not the law, that opens the door of hope, and life, and peace to man.

For this distinction we are indebted to the sovereign goodness of God. It was his law that demanded our

blood ; it was his tender mercy that looked down from high heaven upon us, with a strong purpose to save, and it was his wisdom, infinite in its own resources, that contrived a way in which the honor of the law could be supported, and his grace restore and save the sinner. For this wonderful plan and its blessed results, in our world, we should lift up our loud and joyous songs to him who was *slain for us and has redeemed us to God by his blood*. Redeeming love should be the rapturous theme of all the saints on the earth as it will hereafter furnish the subject of their tuneful hallelujahs in heaven.

It may be farther remarked, in this connection that the pardon of the sinner, without an atonement, must have led to the subversion of the moral government of God. The rational universe, considered as responsible agents, are governed by motives. These motives are addressed to the principles of their rational and moral nature,—to their understanding and consciences, to their hopes and fears,—to their various susceptibilities in relation to their own virtue and happiness, the prerogatives and claims of God, and the rights and welfare of the universe. The penalty of the law, by showing the consequences of transgression, becomes a powerful motive to obedience. The execution of this penalty also upon the transgressor, must have a practical effect, still more decisive, upon all who witness the solemn transaction. They see the consistency of the threatening with its actual infliction. The public declaration and the public act of the law-giver, are in this case, coincident one with the other. But should this penalty be set aside, and no substitute, as it respects the divine government, be introduced, the au-

thority of law is prostrated at once. The threatening of the law-giver, as expressed in the letter, is contradicted by his subsequent public conduct. In the law he has said, the transgressor *shall die*,—in his providence, or in the course of his administration, he says, the transgressor shall not die, in this instance, but live and inherit the kingdom of heaven. As the divine conduct will speak louder than the divine declaration, the penalty of the law would, in time, be looked upon as an empty threatening which was never intended to be carried into execution. This would be the impression made not only upon our world but upon all worlds. The penalty of the law is completely and for ever annihilated ; and as a statute without a sanction is a dead letter, you have a universe without law. What is now called the moral law, instead of binding the creature to perpetual obedience and consigning the transgressor to endless perdition, becomes a mere matter of admonition or advice. As the whole authority of God, is embodied in the penalty of the law, by destroying this penalty, you prostrate the authority of the independent moral Governor. You have now no government left in the universe. This would be the effect of making the penalty of the law bend to the case of the sinner. This would be the consequence of saving sinners without an atonement—without an adequate substitute for the literal infliction of the threatened curse. It cannot admit of a doubt, that it would be better for Adam and all his posterity to perish, than for these consequences to result from their salvation. God would sooner crush a thousand worlds to atoms, and bury them in darkness, or wrap their inhabitants in living flames, than to suffer the stability of his

throne to be shaken, or the integrity of his moral government to be impeached.

Another inference which follows from the premises already established, is this, that the rejection of the doctrine of the atonement, mars the whole system of evangelical truth. Efface this doctrine from the book of God, and you take away every thing peculiar and precious from the gospel of Christ. Remove the atonement, and what remain of the gospel becomes another system—a system incapable of bringing glory to God on the one hand, or consolation to man on the other.

How entirely different from the gospel scheme, is that system which is sometimes inculcated for christian doctrine. Instead of the great atoning Victim who was to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself—Jesus Christ is represented as a great Prophet, raised up for the sole purpose of teaching a more perfect system of moral precepts than had ever before been delivered to our race—to confirm these precepts by his example, and thus to point out the way to a better world. On this scheme, his death was merely the attestation of a martyr to the truth and importance of the doctrine he had delivered. With this system the Deity and atonement of Christ, have no connection. The evil of sin is not estimated by the holiness of that God against whom it is committed ; and the penalty of the law is set aside as a matter of no consequence to the character of God, or the welfare of the universe. To the convicted sinner, this system opens no door of hope ; to the troubled conscience it imparts no celestial balm. This, in the language of the apostle Paul, is *another gospel*—and with him we may say, *Though we, or an angel of*



*from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

The downward progress of sentiment when the doctrine of the atonement is rejected, is matter of public notoriety. The divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, we need not observe, are swept away as a natural and necessary consequence. Sin, which may be pardoned without an expression of God's feelings of disapprobation, is considered as a trivial fault ; and no great veneration is entertained for a law whose requirements and penalty may be easily dispensed with, in order to accommodate and rescue a depraved and rebellious creature. When the moral law is thus degraded, no great affection can be cherished for the gospel ; for the gospel derives all its value from the fact, that it opens a way of salvation for those who are justly and for ever condemned by the law. When the requirements and sanctions of the law, and the provisions of the gospel, are thus prostrated, little veneration will be felt for the Bible. It may continue nominally to occupy the place of an inspired volume, but one offensive or mysterious part after another, will be lopped off, till, though received in the gross, it is rejected in detail. While one hand is ostensibly employed in pressing the holy Oracles to the heart, the other is busy in plucking out the leaves and in committing them to the flames. We have now arrived on the borders of open infidelity—and should the remaining belief in the being of God be too painful for the conscience, atheism may constitute the desired consolation, even if it should not constitute the last item in the melancholy and downward series. Such has been the progress of thousands who have begun their declension, by deny-



ing the important and fundamental doctrine of the atonement.

Let those therefore who would shudder at the thought of making open war upon the Bible, and who, as they send forward their anticipations into eternity, would cherish a hope whose cheerhing light shall never go out in darkness, cling to that grand peculiarity of a moral government and of the gospel plan, stated by the apostle, *without shedding of blood is no remission.*

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FACT OF ATONEMENT.

HITHERTO a single inquiry has occupied our attention,—namely,—*The necessity of atonement* as indicated by the great principles of moral government and the general yet definite disclosures of divine revelation. The conclusion to which the candid and reflecting mind would naturally be conducted, by the course of reasoning already pursued, is that the atonement for sin is an essential part of the gospel plan, and that we may expect to find this doctrine everywhere interwoven with the other great truths which belong to the plan of salvation. But it may be said, in reply, that this is a mere human theory, or, at least, that this is only an inference from a gratuitous and doubtful hypothesis, and must not be relied on when an important and vital doctrine of revelation is concerned. Be it so. It will be proper then to look at this matter, in another light, and to institute an inquiry respecting the FACT of atonement. This is a purely biblical question. No other umpire can sit in judgment in the case. Is it then a *revealed* FACT, that God in saving men, required an

atonement for sin? Was the sacrifice of his own Son a pre-requisite to the accomplishment of this sublime and magnificent work? *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

But in order to overthrow the conclusions to which we were conducted in the previous chapter, a question of great practical importance has often been asked, which may as well be disposed of in this place, before the direct scriptural evidence of the atonement, is presented to the reader. The question is this:—*May not God consistently and safely forgive sin, on the condition of repentance, without an atonement?* There is certainly some degree of plausibility in those views of moral government which go to support the affirmative of this question, and hence it deserves a fair and full reply. Can then the repentance of man supply the place of the atonement? It is a clear case, that the penitent cannot be considered as an innocent being. However deep his contrition, his past conduct, in the eye of the law must continue just as it was. Its character is the same as before. It was sinful when it occurred, and it remains sinful forever. This the conscience of the penitent teaches, and this is confirmed by every principle of law and justice. Repentance, as far as it has any moral character, affects only the present and the future; but it can, in this respect, have no bearing upon past offences. It cannot annihilate them—it cannot palliate their enormity—it cannot modify their circumstances. There they stand, as they were in the judgment of the law, in the mind of God, in the conscience of the sinner, and in the records of the universe. Repentance can, in no sense repair the injury inflicted on the law. It

has no more power, in this respect, in moral than in pecuniary transactions. A man robs you of your property. In this act, he commits a moral wrong, and inflicts a pecuniary evil. He repents: but does this honor the law and cure the difficulty? Must he necessarily be restored because he is sorry? Such a state of mind, on his part, neither cancels his guilt, nor pays you back your money. The law is still a violated and dishonored law, in both the moral and pecuniary aspects of his offence; and its claim is uncanceled. It is not pretended that this example reaches the case fully, but it is analogous and may serve to illustrate it. And if it be true, as every fair and impartial mind will readily concede, because self-evident, that the contrition or sorrow of the highwayman does not cancel his crime, or destroy his example, or repair the mischief he has done, or raise the dead and restore the murdered to his weeping family, or make any amends for the transgression, or render the murderer innocent, or in any sense, alter or modify your pecuniary claim on him, it is equally true, that the same state of mind cannot alter his relations to law in regard to the moral aspect of his deed. Repentance can have, in moral government, no retro-action, and cannot fulfil the high purposes which form the very body and essence of an atonement. This act or state of mind may affect the sinner's moral character, may make him a better man, but it cannot release him from the stern demands of law. The murderer may repent, and he may so deeply feel and deplore his crime, that it may be morally certain, that he will never commit a like offence again. But all this does not relieve him from the penalty of the law. He is still a murderer.

But it may be said, that murderers are often pardoned, in the above circumstances, by human government. Never by the discrete and wise, merely because they are penitent. A dispensation from death should never be granted till every thing in the case which can have an influence on the public welfare is carefully and coolly surveyed. The law and its honor must be sustained. This principle lies at the foundation of the government of God, and of every good government among men; and repentance alone is never deemed a sufficient reason for staying the infliction of penalty.

But in the case of a murderer, it should be remembered, that the infliction of death is not considered the measure of the moral turpitude of his act. When he is executed, we are not to suppose that his crime is expiated or cancelled, and that he is no longer a murderer. The objects to be secured by human law, in such a case, are principally two; to prevent the criminal from repeating his acts of violence on the community, and to operate as a salutary check upon others. So far as the first is concerned, repentance may be a reason why he should be pardoned; but the great interests of the community as it regards the salutary checks of law on others, may require the infliction of all that is threatened. So in the case of a penitent sinner. He might be comparatively secure against future acts of rebellion, or, so far as his moral feelings are concerned, it might be consistent for God to forgive and restore him. But where is the honor of the law? Where is the good of the universe? Where is that terror which God, in benevolence to his creatures, has hung, with his own mighty hand, around the penalty? What would there be in such a case to deter others

from trampling on the divine authority? Repentance, even where it exists, does not reach this point at all; here it is intrinsically weak and inefficient.

But there is another difficulty in the case under consideration. Such is the nature of sin, that it never works its own cure. Its spirit is never effectually subdued by the simple operation of law. There is no provision for this purpose, as the law knows but two classes, the obedient and the disobedient; and for the former it has its rewards, and for the latter its punishments. It has nothing to do with penitence, neither in producing, nor in rewarding it. Some new principle must be introduced into the moral system and superadded to the provisions of the law, before the transgressor can be reclaimed, before he can ever become the subject of true repentance. The proclamation must first come from the throne. If God does not first call after man, man will never seek after God. If the injured Lawgiver does not interpose and offer terms, the incipient act of transgression will become the first link in an endless chain! And without an atonement, what basis is there to sustain an offer? All the difficulties stated in the former discussion, again plant themselves in the way of man's recovery. God cannot begin the work of salvation—cannot offer life on any terms,—cannot make repentance, or any thing else, a condition of acceptance, till the law is properly sustained and honored by an atonement.

There are other objections to that presumptuous scheme which would substitute repentance in the place of atonement. It is not only true, that man as a sinner will never repent and return to his allegiance, without an offer from God, and that this offer can never be



consistently made without some basis besides law to sustain it; but the mere operation of law can never produce repentance. It is deficient in motives for this purpose. There are but three possible ways in which the law could influence man to repent,—by the loveliness of its precept, by the terror of its threatened curse, or by the actual infliction of that curse. With regard to the precept, it has no charms as viewed by an impenitent heart. It may allure the penitent to acts of future obedience, but it has no power to originate *godly sorrow* for sin. The threatened penalty may alarm the sinner, by showing him what he deserves from the hand of the Lawgiver, but if the only motive to the renunciation of sin, is the fear of punishment, the effect will be *the sorrow of the world that worketh death*. With regard to the infliction of the penalty, no time need be consumed, as no one will contend, that it has a converting power. The world of future punishment is neither a penitentiary, nor a purgatory, and it is any thing but a world of evangelical, or genuine repentance. The ingenuous, godly sorrow for sin,—the change of mind,—the thorough moral reformation which the Bible calls repentance, is never found in the world of endless death, and is always produced by other motives than those prescribed by the law. There is not a solitary fact on record for our contemplation, in the whole history of man's redemption, to induce the belief, that repentance is ever produced by mere legal influences. The gospel alone is clothed with this power,—and the gospel too that includes the atonement. Here are motives divinely commissioned to the heart:—motives well adapted, stronger than sin, high as heaven, broad and deep, and endless as eternity. These motives, drawn from

the love of God and the blood of Christ, have subdued millions of hearts, and will continue to effect this wonderful and magnificent work, till the purposes of God respecting our world are all fulfilled.

The question then whether God may consistently forgive man, on his repentance, without an atonement for sin, stands thus:—No one ever will repent without a prior movement on the part of God; should the moral Governor offer terms of reconciliation without atonement to authorize such overtures, the principles of the law would be sacrificed; and, these difficulties apart, no person ever did repent, or ever will repent, while under the influence of mere legal motive, or, in other words without the effectual and heart-subduing appeals of the gospel. Evangelical repentance, or a thorough moral renovation of heart and life, is so far from being a suitable substitute for an atonement, in the moral government of God, that its very existence or exercise, pre-supposes the law already vindicated, the character of God fully and publicly sustained in the offers of acceptance and life, the atonement finished and approved, as the broad and solid basis of the sinner's hope, and the new and peculiar motives of this scheme of mercy rendered effectual by the subduing power of the Spirit speaking to us in *the glorious gospel of the blessed God*.

We have again arrived at the same point to which we were conducted by our reasonings on the necessity of an atonement; and we now enter upon the direct proof of the FACT that such an atonement has been provided, with a strong presumption in its favor. The interpretation of the whole book of God, must be essentially affected by the manner in which the question

now under examination shall be settled. The advocate and the opposer of this doctrine, while they differ *toto cælo* in other respects, agree in certain facts belonging to the system of the gospel. They both believe, that Jesus Christ lived and died,—that he revealed the will of God more perfectly than had ever before been done—and that he is the author of salvation to man. They must consequently both believe, that man was, in some sense, lost, and that a Redeemer was needful for him. The point in controversy between them is this,—was man, as a sinner, in a condition beyond the reach of forgiveness without atonement ; and did Jesus Christ die not merely as a pattern of suffering innocence or passive heroism, or as a martyr to seal, by his blood, the truth of his doctrine, but, by that blood, to redeem sinners from the curse of the law ? In the present attempt to settle this question, it may be proper to take a wider range than barely to appeal to the ordinary proof-texts, which are considered as belonging to this discussion ; or, to aver, as we could with a clear and good conscience, that to us it seems a fact portentous and terrible, in their case, that men of learning and ordinary pretensions to candor, can read the whole Book of God, especially such compared portions as the book of Leviticus and the Epistle to the Hebrews, believing sincerely that they are divine oracles and in common *given by inspiration of God*, and yet doubt, or above all deny, the fact of atonement, as made by our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of men !

The doctrines of *Substitution* and *Sacrifice* are interwoven with the whole fabric of revelation ;—nor can these, by any mode of fair exegesis, or any new and

ingenious readings, or alleged interpolations be disengaged from the entire and universal structure without destroying its essential points. In this inquiry we must expect, as in all others which pertain purely to religion, to be conducted at first by the mere twilight of the early dawn, and we may anticipate that the day will wax brighter and brighter till in a finished revelation, the sun in full-orbed radiance will shine upon us. The New Testament must in many things, be consulted as the only infallible expositor of the Old.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES, it will readily be conceded, form a part of that system of worship taught in the Bible, and are likewise incorporated with many systems of Paganism. If we look at the origin of these rites,—trace the changes which mark their history, as they become more and more definite and expressive, in their symbols,—and, especially, if we employ the *KEY of exposition*, furnished by the writers of the New Testament, to unlock their deep and hidden mysteries, we can hardly fail in the exercise of diligence and candor, of arriving at the conclusion, that the doctrine of atonement for sin enters in one form and another, into the very texture of revelation, warp and woof;—it is incorporated with the frame-work, and lives and beats, as the vital principle, in the very heart of the gospel.

THE ADAMIC SACRIFICES deserve, at the commencement of this discussion, a moment's notice. They must have been of divine origin. All the circumstances of the case go to establish this point. These rites appeared soon after the fall; they existed in the family of our first parents; and they were practised, at least in the case of Abel with the approbation of God. Cain brought of *the fruit of the ground*, and Abel, *the first-*

*lings of his flock, an offering unto the Lord.* The apostle Paul tells us, that, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.* The difference between Cain and Abel, in these offerings, was, that the latter had faith, the former had not. Faith may here be taken in a general sense, as most commentators are inclined to consider it, as implying a belief in God, his moral government, and in future rewards and punishments ; or it may be taken in a more specific sense, for trust or confidence in the declaration of God respecting the sinner's approach to him, in acts of worship, and his pardon and acceptance. In the latter sense, it is far more expressive than in the former. Now if we suppose, what we shall by and by learn to be the fact, as we trace the thread of divine history touching this matter, that animal sacrifices were employed, by God himself, as a constant and perpetual memento, under the early dispensations of mercy, of man's sinfulness and God's method of dispensing pardon and life through the sacrifice of another, all will be clear and expressive. Abel exercised faith in God's mode of restoring the sinner, and he brought the required sacrifice ; Cain was a cool, philosophical Unitarian, and brought a rational sacrifice, and poured contempt on that appointed of God to remind man of sin, and to be the standing symbol, for ages, of the Mediator and his sacrifice. He needed no expiring animal to teach him what he deserved ; no blood to atone for him ; no mediator through whom he might approach God and be blessed ! Abel, on the other hand worshipped God, by adopting gospel-symbols ; and, by exercising faith in the ap-



pointment and promise of God, *obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.* We are utterly forbidden by such expressions as these, to believe, that sacrifices are of human invention. These rites were appointed by God. They probably had their birth in the garden of Eden. The flesh of those animals of whose *skins* God himself made the first garments which covered our sinning parents, was, by the order of the same being, offered in sacrifice. To suppose that the very family of Adam should have invented such a mode of worship, and that God should have put his own seal to such a decree, if it has no signification—no deep spiritual meaning, and no divine authority in the plan of God, is too absurd for credulity itself to believe.

If it should be objected that this is making too much of a few facts stated in man's early history, and a few occasional comments on the same, recorded in the New Testament, the answer is, that if we had nothing more in the Bible, on this subject, the exception would be correctly taken. But we have here the first facts of a long series connecting man with God in acts of religious worship,—and these facts are all of the same character, and sustain the same relations to man and to God, and they must have had a common origin and they are to be explained on common principles. We stand here by a fountain from which issues a stream that increases as it flows for more than forty centuries, through the successive pages of revelation, till the book of God is finished; and we might as well say that the little spring is not *water*, because it is not the broad and deep and majestic river that empties into the ocean, as to affirm, that the hand of God, and the religion of the gos-



pel, and the hope of sinful man, and the typical blood of the Lamb of God, are not in these early sacrifices, merely because they are not all spread out and expounded in the broad light of day, as they are in the maturer writings of a more finished revelation. Indeed in the interpretation of these primitive facts and symbols, we must borrow our lamp from a brighter and more perfect age of the church.

THE PATRIARCHAL SACRIFICES will aid us in the investigation of the doctrine of atonement for sin. At the period of the church to which reference is here made, we may expect additional light respecting the appointed rites of religious worship; and from the Patriarchs, those good men *of whom the world was not worthy*, we may look for clearer views of the way of salvation than were enjoyed at an earlier age. When Noah, with his family, went out of the ark and took possession of the new world, and became the second father of the human race, he *builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.* In this passage, taken in all its bearings, recording, as it does, the act of a distinguished saint and the second progenitor of mankind, and written as it was, at the very dawn of a new creation, and destined to send out an influence through all future time among his descendants, we see that it contains much more than, at a single glance, meets the eye. It has a retrospective import too.—The reader, without any presumption, may readily infer that Noah was now performing an accustomed act. He had learned the doc-

trine of sacrifice before the flood. The distinction between *clean and unclean* animals was already established, and with his eye on this distinction he had taken an additional number of the former class into the ark. He "*offered burnt-offerings on the altar.*" These were offerings for sin, as we shall see in a subsequent part of this inquiry. His sacrifices were accepted, as is indicated in the expressions, "*The Lord smelled a sweet savor ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.*" It is impossible, in reading this simple narrative, to resist the conviction, that the historian is here recording common events—things well known and familiar in that age of the church. No novelties are here presented to the eye. Altars and sacrifices belonged to the worship of God ; and Noah, having been acquainted with them in the old world, used them as he and other pious men had been accustomed to do in former times. Nor is the impression less distinct, that these rites were not human inventions founded on false conceptions of the Deity, but were of divine origin and divine appointment. They were practised by the best men in the world, and received, as a part of revelation, the seal and signature of God.

We find Abraham, soon after he entered the land of Canaan, and when the Lord had appeared to him and promised him that land as his future inheritance, employing the same rites of worship. *He builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.* With this *altar*, and this *invocation*, we naturally and necessarily, as in other cases, associate the accustomed sacrifice. On another occasion, amidst special divine revelations he was directed, by God himself, what kind

of sacrifices to offer. *Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove and a young pigeon.* And in that affecting page of his history when he was called to offer up his own son Isaac, we cannot fail of discovering the hand and purpose of God in these ancient sacrifices. Indeed we learn, from a few facts incidentally recorded, what must have been universally known and fully understood, by the people of God in that age of the world. As we follow the footsteps of this venerable patriarch and his beloved son, on their singular and painful mission to Mount Moriah, we see Isaac carrying *the wood of the burnt-offering*, while Abraham has the fire in one hand and the knife in the other. These preparations excited no alarm in the bosom of Isaac, for they all belonged to the acts of divine worship which were both customary and required, in the patriarchal age ; and but one thing was wanting to render them complete. And Isaac said, *Behold the fire and the wood : but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ?* This inquiry shows us what was customary on such occasions ; and when the altar was built on the destined spot, and the wood laid in order upon it ; and when we see Isaac bound and laid *on the altar on the wood* ; and afterwards when the fatal blow had been averted which would have taken the life of this beloved son, and the *ram caught in a thicket by his horns* was substituted in his place, we are no longer in the dark, unless by voluntary blindness, in relation to the existing usages of divine worship.

We see Jacob on a certain occasion, building an altar by the express command of God. *And God said unto Jacob, arise go up to Bethel, and dwell there ; and*

*make thee an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. And when he removed to Beer-sheba, with his family and effects, on his way to Egypt, he offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.*

Job, the patriarch of Uz, who lived at a very early period, probably after the death of Joseph and before the departure of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, offered sacrifices in the same manner and with the same external rites, which we have already noticed. When his children were holding feasts alternately in their respective houses, this good man *rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.* The nature of these sacrifices we cannot mistake. They were *burnt-offerings*. They were sacrifices for sin. The language of revelation is by no means equivocal on this point. *It may be my sons have SINNED.* But a still stronger confirmation of the position which has been taken,—if a stronger is needed or can be had,—may be found in a subsequent incident of this patriarch's life. When he was about to emerge from his deep gloom, and again enjoy the approving sun-light of heaven, God gave this direction to his erring friends: *Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept.* And all this was done, and *the Lord also accepted Job.* Here we have sacrifice and prayer united; these acts of service were required by God; and, when they were offered according to his direction, they were owned and ac-

cepted. Indeed, during the entire patriarchal ages of the church, the altar and the lamb, acceptable homage and answers of mercy, are so intimately associated, that we need entertain no doubt of the origin or the import of these excellent rites. God required the sacrifice of animals among the externals of his own worship, he prescribed the mode of these offerings, pious men obeyed his commands, and in the answers of peace which were given, there is shed, over the whole transaction, the approving smile of heaven.

THE MOSAIC SACRIFICES will farther instruct us on this subject, in as much as they teach by express authority what the former facts and examples have done, incidentally and by legitimate influence. But the whole economy of Moses cannot be even glanced at, not to say examined, in this brief survey. A few particulars only will be selected. That animal sacrifices formed a part, and an important and essential part of the Old Testament dispensation, no one will deny who admits that God gave a revelation to the Israelites, and, through them to the world, by Moses. The admission of this fact, and its explanation given by the rejectors of the doctrine of atonement, that sacrifices existed, at that day, among all the nations, and that God, for wise and good purposes incorporated these rites into the Mosaic system, although they were of human origin, is by no means satisfactory or at all probable. But this point will be more fully considered in another connection.

The PASSOVER deserves a distinct and special notice. It was first enjoyed in Egypt, and afterwards incorporated with the other institutes of God given to Moses at Mount Sinai. Its retrospective or commemo-



rative character will not be denied. It was, through successive generations, to remain a standing memento of God's mercy in sparing the Israelites when he passed through the land, and slew the first born in all the houses of the Egyptians. The lamb was selected and slain, and his blood which, by divine command, was sprinkled upon the posts of the door and the lintel, was the symbol of grace. Whenever the blood was found, the destroyer passed by, and the inmates of that habitation were spared. They were protected by *blood*. But something more was implied in this institution than the commemoration of a temporal deliverance. The circumstances of the case all seem to indicate this fact. The nature of the victim, his selection from the flock, the formalities of his sacrifice, and the final disposal of all things pertaining to it, naturally lead the mind to another and a higher application of the symbols and ceremonies than to the preservation experienced by the Israelites in Egypt. But should doubts still remain after a careful and critical examination of the ordinance itself, these doubts must vanish when we open a clearer and a better revelation. The institution of the Lord's supper at the time of the Passover, and for the manifest purpose of taking the place of that ordinance, and of superceding its future use, is by no means a doubtful intimation of the true typical meaning of the ordinance. And Paul in writing to the Corinthians has expressly given this interpretation: *For even CHRIST, our PASSOVER, is sacrificed for us.* The candid reader of the scriptures, and the honest inquirer after truth, can hardly fail to see, in these appointed symbols, *The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*



THE BURNT-OFFERINGS required by the law of Moses, are not less obvious in their reference to the death and sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice, whether it was of the herd or the flock, must be *a male without blemish*, and be presented voluntarily. A full account may be found in the first chapter of Leviticus. The animal was brought to the door of the Tabernacle, the hands of the offerer were laid on the head of the victim, which act was a symbol of the confession of sin, and always attended with such confession, the animal was then slain, and the blood was sprinkled, by the Priest, upon the altar. It is expressly said that this offering should be accepted of the person who presented it *to make ATONEMENT for him*.

THE SIN-OFFERING was presented, in specific cases, for the Priest, the whole congregation, the ruler, and a private person, or an individual of the people. In all these cases the hands were laid upon the head of the animal, and of course with confession of sin, he was then slain and his blood was disposed of with various significant ceremonies, and *an atonement* was thus made. The reader is referred to the fourth chapter of Leviticus for a full account of these ceremonies.

The sacrifices of the *great day of EXPIATION* have an intimate connection with the point in hand. These rites were performed once a year. The details may be found in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. The High Priest might enter the holy place within the veil only on the day of annual atonement. He carried with him the blood of a sin-offering for himself, and likewise for the people. By the former he made *AN ATONEMENT for himself, and for his house*. The offering for the people consisted of two goats. The two formed one sacrifice.

Lots were cast upon these animals—one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat. The one on which the Lord's lot fell was offered as a sin-offering, and the other was *presented alive to the Lord, to MAKE AN ATONEMENT with him.* When the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled according to the directions given, the live goat must be disposed of in the following manner. “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all the iniquities unto a land not inhabited.”—In these singular transactions we have sacrifice, substitution, and atonement. To suppose that these rites actually made an atonement for sin, and procured forgiveness and the divine favor, is asking more than can well be believed; but if they are looked on as types or emblems, they may all find their archetype or substance in the great work of reconciliation effected by Jesus Christ.

But on this point, nothing is left to human conjecture. What might have been dark, or, at least, comparatively obscure, at an earlier period of revelation, is made clear as broad noon-day to us. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews contains a divine exposition of the true import of the Levitical sacrifices, and virtually, and, on the principle of fair reasoning, of the other sacrifices which are mentioned, in the Bible, as having been offered by good men, and accepted by God. No person was ever better qualified for such a discussion than the author of this Epistle. He was thoroughly educated

in the Mosaic ritual, and divinely inspired for this work.

The first point we should settle is the true nature of the ceremonial law. The apostle assures us, that it was typical. It was not the substance but the shadow. Its influence in procuring pardon and the favor of God, depended on an efficacy, not inherent, but symbolical. "For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image [substance] of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect." This passage speaks for itself. It speaks clearly without a commentator. The law of Moses presents the types, the gospel the antitypes. And the principle of interpreting the law here laid down by the apostle, not only applies to the sacrifices themselves, but to every thing pertaining to them,—to the victim, its death, the priest, the holy place, the altar, the blood. They were all types or symbols; and they are all divinely expounded by the apostle, so that no doubt need remain that Christ was in these ancient rites. He tells us, that the "priests that offer gifts according to the law, serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." But this is not all, for he informs us who is indicated by this "EXAMPLE and SHADOW." It is none other than Jesus Christ who embodies all that was shadowed forth by the Aaronic priesthood. "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices:—wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."

It would be difficult indeed for the cool and dispassionate inquirer after truth to resist the following conclusions from the above cited passages.—That the high priest under the law was a typical personage ; that Jesus Christ is his *antitype* ; that the sacrifices which were prescribed by the law were of a typical character ; and that their true evangelical import was fulfilled when the Son of God became both priest and victim, and offered himself a sacrifice for sin on the cross ! Why else was Christ a High Priest ? And why “ of necessity ” must he, in this character, “ have somewhat also to offer ? ” These questions have never been answered. By the rejectors of the atonement they never can be satisfactorily, or properly, or safely, or innocently answered.

But it is not an accidental or occasional glance that the apostle takes at this subject. He has made assurance doubly sure. He presents, again and again, the union of priest and sacrifice, in the work of Jesus Christ. Take the following. “ For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s : for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” There are many other passages of the same import. With a few quotations more, the reader must be referred to the Epistle. “ But now once in the eyes of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” “ Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” “ But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” “ For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them

that are sanctified." We must here bear in mind, that Christ is spoken of in the two-fold character of priest and sacrifice, and that too in special reference to the institution of Moses. And it is in these relations, that he "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,"—that he "was once offered to bear the sins of many"—that he "offered one sacrifice for sins," that he was himself at once the offering and the offerer of the great atonement. Follow the apostle as he traces, step by step, the analogies between the old dispensation and the new, in Chapter ninth of this Epistle. Look into "the Holiest of all," beyond the veil, whither "went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." Mark his declaration, that this was "a figure for the time then present," or as Professor Stuart, for good reasons, translates the passage, "which hath been a type down to the present time"—and you are prepared to contemplate that other and still greater High Priest of good things to come" who "entered in once into the holy place," not "by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood," "having obtained eternal redemption for us." Pursuing the same subject, and tracing the same analogies between the priesthood of Aaron and the priesthood of Christ, and between the sacrifices offered by the one and those offered by the other, and adverting to the ceremonial purification effected by the blood of the devoted animal, he finishes the parallel in the following expressive language. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" And every where

in this discussion of the priesthood and offering of Christ, as in the Levitical sacrifices, great stress is laid on "blood." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "The blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified." The same remark holds good respecting the use of the word *blood*, in the New Testament wherever it has any reference to the redemption of man through Jesus Christ. Some instances of this will be given where another aspect of the subject is presented.

What has been said of sacrifices as having a relation to the doctrine of atonement for sin, may now be closed by a brief summing up of the whole matter. These rites existed among the true worshippers of God from the apostacy to the coming of Christ; they were honored by the approbation of heaven, long before we have any distinct account of their origin; they were at a late age, incorporated with the Mosaic ritual, and formed no inconsiderable part of that system; and the New Testament writers every where expound these typical and shadowy ceremonies,—dark and vain and even unmeaning in themselves,—as referring to Jesus Christ, the true sacrifice. No conclusion can be more confidently relied on, than that they had their origin in the appointment of God. Here we may plant our feet on a solid rock; and we may stand, on this elevation, with the last book of the inspired Oracles open before us and the eye fixed on the hand writing of God—"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,"—and conducted by rays of living light, we may look back through the intricate Jewish ritual—scanning its priest, its altar, its victim, and its blood—and we may clearly understand what we behold. Thus 'enlightened and



aided, we may travel back, in thought, through the patriarchal and other early sacrifices, till we arrive, in our retrospective search, at the very first page of man's religious history ; and we cannot fail to receive evangelical instruction as we gaze on the expiring lamb of righteous Abel, which he offered up in faith, at the very gates of Eden.

In this connection, a word or two may be said of HEATHEN SACRIFICES. Every reader of general history, as well as every classical scholar, knows that all Pagan nations, ancient and modern, have offered animals in sacrifice to their deities ; and *some* of these, we know, were considered *propitiatory*. Every ancient poet and historian, and every modern christian missionary, confirms this remark. Read Homer, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Pliny, and Cæsar :—they all record facts and opinions enough for our purpose, on this point. The same may be said of the records of existing missions among the Heathen. The simplest, if not the only, way to account for the existence of these sacrifices, and especially those which have any connection with the confession of sin, and its supposed expiation, or the obtaining of pardon and future blessing, is to refer them to a divine origin. To suppose that the Heathen, in their gross ignorance or their unsanctified ingenuity, invented sacrifices, and that the Hebrews afterwards borrowed them and adopted their use, and that too by divine direction, which has been asserted by some learned men who have denied the atonement made by Jesus Christ, is certainly a rare instance of the absurdity of their resort who are hard pushed by argument. It hardly deserves, as it has often received, a grave answer. To say nothing of the profaneness of

the supposition that Jehovah was obliged to accommodate his institutions to the corrupt taste and inveterate habits of idolaters, in order to conciliate his people and instruct them in the way to heaven, this motive involves the assumption that Paganism is older than revelation. Bible history is against these men. Indeed universal history is against them. What human beings could have offered sacrifices earlier than did Cain and Abel? If Adam and Eve did, they must have derived the ordinance from heaven, for had it been a wicked or stupid device of their own, their presumption would no doubt have been rebuked. All the Antediluvian sacrifices, with which we are not particularly concerned here,—may be referred to the family of Adam. And in the renewed world, after the deluge, what corrupt heathen was there to teach Noah to offer that sacrifice which arose as “a sweet savor” to heaven, and was accepted of God, according to our opponents, because nothing better could be done? And where is there a shred of proof that Moses borrowed the sacrifices he instituted either from the Egyptians or any other Pagan nation, when the Scriptures contain the strongest and the clearest internal evidence to the contrary? These sacrifices bear a resemblance not to the offerings of any then existing and unenlightened people, but to those which may be traced along the entire lives of the pious and venerable worshippers of the true God from Abel to Moses. This view of the subject leads us to the following important conclusions. Sacrifices—and special reference is here had to those of an expiatory or propitiatory nature—are of divine origin; those offered by the heathen, both in earlier and in later ages, were taught, and have been perpetuated, by mutilated and

distorted traditions ; and these offerings of the universal world, as they were originally designed by God, have tended to keep up with more or less distinctness, in all ages and in all countries, a sense of sin and of ill-desert, the hope or probability of forgiveness, and the notion that this needed blessing must come to guilty man, in some way, through an expiation or atonement.

But the Scriptures contain other and more direct proofs, that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for the sins of man. To present them all would require a little volume of quotations from the Bible. Before giving some of these, it may here be remarked once for all, that not a few of the references which will be made, have either direct or remote relations to the instituted sacrifices already discussed,—thus incidentally, and without apparent design, confirming the typical nature of these rites, and proving beyond controversy, that Jesus Christ fulfilled these ancient types. It has been said, it is true, by some who discard the doctrine of atonement, that all such passages, and indeed many already mentioned, in the previous discussion, must be taken as figurative. Sacrifices, say they, existed, but for what reason or purpose, they do not very clearly tell us. These rites were well known by the Jews, and indeed by others ; and in allusion to them, Christ is spoken of as having been sacrificed, and special mention is made of his blood. This theory has, at least, the merit of originality. Its author, whatever else he might lack, certainly possessed invention. Every thing is here invented. Christ is the figure, sacrifices the reality ; he is the shadow, they the substance ; he the type, they the antitype ! As if a man should stand and gaze on the finely chiseled statue, or on a beauti-

ful tree upon the margin of the clear still lake, and should inquire why these charming objects were made thus,—and the philosophical expounder of cause and effect, at his side, should reply, look at that shadow on the marble floor, or in the deep water, and the mystery is solved. The substance was thus made to suit the shadow. We may speak of the former as beautiful because the latter is really so. In the hands of such interpreters, the Bible is a labyrinth, or a riddle and a snare, but not a revelation!

*The voice of PROPHECY* speaks to us, in still clearer accents, of the atoning work of Christ. This we might naturally expect, as the light of revelation was rising upon a dark world with increasing radiance, and as the coming Messiah,—his birth, character, teaching, sufferings, death and future glory,—furnished the constant and most glowing themes of these inspired bards. “To him give all the prophets witness,” says the apostle Peter. And Jesus Christ, while yet on earth, said to his disciples, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.” The typical sacrifices already considered, included among the things written in the law of Moses, and with these the prophets leave a concurrent testimony. A few specimens of their testimony bearing directly upon the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, will here be given. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as Jewish and Christian interpreters, inspired and uninspired, agree, refers to the promised Redeemer. No fair and faithful exposition of these remarkable predictions can set aside the doctrine of vicarious sufferings which enters into the very essence and vital structure of the whole passage.

What can be more explicit than such language as this? "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."—His sufferings were for our sins,—they were strictly vicarious,—and by these "stripes," or wounds, others—even all that believe—are "healed," or saved. Here we have not only substitution, but we have as the effect of this, salvation. And in all this we are to remember, that he was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." His sufferings and death were not merely the work of man; the hand of God was in them, and a special purpose was to be accomplished by them. This sublime event was not a martyrdom which should secure good by its moral power, but it was a sacrifice to divine justice. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgressions of my people was he stricken." Men were to be saved by this sacrifice required and accepted of God. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge,"—or by *the knowledge of him*—"shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." If one being should die in the place, and for the sins of another, and the person for whom this death was sustained, should be forgiven, justified and for ever blessed, by the merits of that death, surely such a transaction would be recorded, if recorded at all, in the above, or at least, in similar language. The whole passage, beginning with the thirteenth verse of the

preceding chapter, and extending through the fifty-third chapter, is worthy of the prayerful and profound attention of the humble inquirer after truth—nay, of every human being who is capable of such attention.

Nor is the prophet Daniel less explicit. The prediction recorded in the close of the ninth chapter of the book bearing his name, which has been fulfilled as to time, contains no doubtful description of the kind of death “Messiah the Prince” should die. He should “be cut off,”—or come to a violent end. “But not for himself;” or his death should not be on his own account, or in consequence of his own sins. It should be a death suffered for other persons. And the purposes to be accomplished by this death were no less than these:—“to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” Every part of this description bears strong and decisive marks of substitution and sacrifice as blended in the death of “the Messiah.” And the declaration, “he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” finds its accomplishment in the fact, that the type was removed when the antitype was presented,—the shadow passed away when the enduring substance came and took its place.

Jesus Christ gave his disciples, while with them and instructing them in the designs of his mission, the same views of the nature of that death which awaited him. In the office of the good shepherd, he says, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” On another occasion he remarked, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give



his life a ransom for many.'” Nothing could be more explicit than this. Commentary would only weaken its force. If Jesus Christ gave his life a ransom for many,—and who, in the face of this passage, will deny it,—then he died to make atonement for them, that they might be saved; the debate is ended, the controversy settled. While instituting the supper, he said, with the cup in his hand, “This is my blood of the New Testament, [covenant or constitution,] which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Blood shed for the remission of sins! Surely such a transaction could not describe martyrdom! It can mean nothing other than sacrifice,—and a sacrifice too that is clothed with saving power. We have here the “blood” offered, and a “remission of sins” secured. That this was the general tenor of his teaching appears from what he said to certain disciples, after his resurrection, who had given him up as the Messiah because he had been crucified. “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?—And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.” And these were the things which related to the nature and the objects of his death, and which he had taught them before his crucifixion, for he added in a similar connection and in reference to the same point, “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.”

THE APOSTLES who were the first teachers and the inspired interpreters of the gospel, dwell upon no point

with more clearness or frequency, than this,—that salvation can be obtained only through the death of Jesus Christ for sinners. This sentiment pervades their sermons, breathes in their prayers, and is the living spirit that animates their epistles. It would far exceed the limits of this discussion to undertake to notice all the relations in which this grand act is mentioned, as evidently implying 'vicarious sufferings, and by these sufferings, atonement made for sin.

Great stress is laid upon the DEATH of Christ, such as would appear altogether improper and extravagant, and void of reason, if this event were to be considered as a martyrdom, or, indeed, to be viewed in any other light, than that of the atoning sacrifice for sin, and the price of man's redemption. Paul in writing to the Romans, assures us, that "Christ died for the ungodly." He encourages christians in the following language: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." In writing to the Corinthians, the same apostle informs us, that he had made the death of Christ a prominent point in preaching the gospel. "For I delivered unto you," says he, "first of all that which I also received, how that CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS according to the Scriptures." And to the same church, he says, "We thus judge, that if ONE DIED FOR ALL, then were all dead, [then all died,] and that HE DIED FOR ALL, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who DIED FOR THEM, and rose again." He encourages the Thessalonians in this language: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who DIED for us, that

whether we wake or sleep, [live or die,] we should live together with him." To the Hebrews he writes: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of DEATH, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should TASTE DEATH for every man."

THE BLOOD of Christ is mentioned in various relations which imply, in the strongest possible degree the fact of atonement for sin. Paul in his farewell address to the Elders of Ephesus, charges them "to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his OWN BLOOD." To the Romans he holds this decisive language: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in HIS BLOOD, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." In another place he has this phrase, "being now justified by his BLOOD." To the Ephesians he says, "In whom we have redemption, through HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins." Again, "In Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by THE BLOOD OF CHRIST." In his Epistle to the Colossians he teaches the same doctrine. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And Jesus Christ, in reconciling all things unto himself, he describes, as "having made peace through *the blood of his cross*." To the Hebrews, besides those numerous passages which have been referred to in the exposition of the Jewish sacrifices, he says, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with HIS OWN BLOOD, suffered without the gate." Peter writes to christians, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not

redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with THE PRECIOUS BLOOD of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." And the beloved John testifies, that " THE BLOOD OF CHRIST his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The term "BLOOD," in these and similar passages, stands in such relations to other terms, as to render its meaning perfectly clear. It is associated with "purchased," "justified," "redeemed," "sanctified," "cleanseth," "redemption," "propitiation," "remission," "forgiveness of sins !" A child is a competent expositor of these scriptures.

This subject is presented in many other aspects, in the Bible, which assert or imply, that men are saved only through the atonement. Christians are *redeemed* by Jesus Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace through the REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus,"—"Having obtained eternal REDEMPTION for us,"—"Christ has REDEEMED us from the curse of the law." Sinners are *justified* only through Christ. "By him all that believe are JUSTIFIED from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." "THE JUSTIFIER of him which believeth in Jesus." He is expressly called a *propitiation*. "And he is THE PROPITIATION for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be THE PROPITIATION for our sins." Christ is a *ransom* ;—"Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." His great blessing for sinners, is called *an atonement* ;—"We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received THE ATONEMENT." "Believers

are PURCHASED with blood, "BOUGHT with a price," and the whole collective company of the ransomed are called the PURCHASED POSSESSION."

The doctrine of the atonement is held by the church triumphant, as it ever has been by the church militant. It is taught, and joyfully responded to, and never denied, in heaven. "The four living ones and the four and twenty elders" sing "a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." When the inquiry is made respecting the "great multitude" "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands"—the answer is, "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

If any thing more were necessary in order to establish the doctrine of vicarious suffering, in the work of man's salvation, the reader might be invited to turn his eyes upon the death-scene of the Son of God. There are some things connected with this eventful crisis of his earthly career, which can be explained only on the principles, that he stood in the place of guilty man, and sustained the incumbent tokens and volumes of the wrath of God, that we might be saved. The deep agony of the garden, and the piercing nails of the cross, would be inexplicable on the supposition that he died merely as an example, as a passive hero, or as a martyr. These are not the feelings and expressions of a good man who has fully settled the question of duty, who can cheerfully die rather than deny the truth, and who in all these severe conflicts of na-

ture, corporeal and mental, is sustained by conscious virtue and the approving smile of heaven! He confessed to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me."—And when he had gone a little farther, and fallen on his face, he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." While hanging on the cross, he exclaimed, in the midst of friends and foes, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We have here something more than a pious man arrived, in his progress through a bad world, at the sublimest moral elevation of earthly destinies—the crisis of martyrdom! These are not the lineaments, nor the colorings of such a picture. Here is a conflict of a far different character, and the actor is more than man. One would think, that those who deny the atoning work of Christ, could hardly read the story of Stephen or of Socrates, without learning their mistake. But if we consider, that Jesus Christ stood in the sinner's place,—that "the Lord of hosts" had said, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow," then all is clear. The deep mystery is solved. These conflicts and agonies were his, not because he anticipated, or actually suffered, the pangs of death, but because *his soul was made an offering for sin*. And if we have in the death of Christ, nothing more than the event of martyrdom, which has been by no means unfrequent in our world, what mean the sublime and impressive concomitants of this closing scene? Look upon that darkened sun,—that temple veil rent in twain,—that trembling earth,—those rending rocks,—those opening graves,—those waking sleepers from their dark abodes,—those brave Roman guards, now pale as



death ! In the midst of these sublime and impressive exhibitions, we may exclaim with the centurion, 'Truly, this was the Son of God;' and in this connection, we may add, he was now tasting death for every man. Hence those oppressive burdens that crushed his spirit.

A few of the direct proofs that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for the sins of men, in the true and legitimate sense of the term, have been given, while multitudes more will readily occur to the critical and devout student of the Bible. If there is any one doctrine peculiar to the gospel-plan which rests securely, more than almost any other, on the broad and firm basis of a thousand plain and positive declarations of the God of truth, it is this. Human language could not make the matter clearer. No vehicle of thought, or medium of communication between man and man, or between heaven and earth, if we except the personal inspiration of the individual to be taught, could add one whit to that testimony which has already been given. No light from above could impart one additional ray of brightness to that divine illumination which God has already poured from the inspired page, upon this subject. The system which embraces this doctrine, in all its relations, is the gospel ; and there is no other. It is the only remedy for sin,—the only hope of dying man. The Bible is full of it. The pride of an unsubdued heart may oppose it, and the loftiness, and presumption of unsanctified intellect may attempt to fritter away its proof and dispense with its mercies and its glories from the pages of the gospel ; but the sinner deeply stricken with a sense of ill-desert, can easily understand it, for he

feels its necessity. The humble soul can easily love it,—he cannot but love it,—for he sees life, and hope, and heaven in it. This is God's plan for man's salvation,—the very one of which the blessed Paul affirms, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," let him be ANATHEMA, as it is literally in the original—the final and most terrible curse of GOD !

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

AN attempt was made, in the first chapter of this work, to show that the doctrine of the atonement is a fundamental article of the christian system, and an essential pre-requisite—a SINE-QUA-NON—to the salvation of fallen man. Such a provision, it would seem, from the course of reasoning there pursued, was necessary in order that God might furnish an expression of his regard for the moral law, evince his determination to punish sin or execute the penalty of the law, and thus vindicate his character and establish his government in the estimation of the rational universe, while he extends pardon and eternal life to the sinner.

That an atonement, embracing and securing these great objects, has been made, it is presumed, is equally clear from the train of thought presented, in the second chapter, in close connection with the sacred volume. It is perfectly safe, in our theological sentiments, to rest on the naked and reiterated declarations of God; and the mind experiences an additional gratification in doing this, when these declarations, on minute and thor-

ough examination, appear entirely accordant with the sound principles of human reason. There should be no shrinking, under the dictation of pride or vain philosophy, from such assertions of the Holy Spirit as these :—" He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed." " The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." " But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we werè yet sinners, Christ died for us."—" In due time Christ died for the ungodly." " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." " Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." " Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Believing that the necessity of the atonement has been fully established, and relying on the truth of those declarations of the Bible, already considered and explained, in which we are taught, that Jesus Christ has made such an atonement as was demanded by the condition of the sinner, the character of God and the honor of the law, it becomes a matter by no means of trivial importance to ascertain and define the nature of that satisfaction which he has rendered to God on our behalf. Much indistinctness and confusion have existed, and do still exist, in the christian church, in relation to this point. Persons who contend earnestly for the doctrine of the atonement, nevertheless differ as to its nature ; and differ so considerably too, that it is far from being a matter of idle speculation to inquire which side of this question, is supported by reason and the word of God. The object of this inquiry is not to

excite or gratify the spirit of idle speculation, or of fruitless controversy, but, if possible to elicit truth by candid and christian discussion.

As it respects the nature of the atonement made by Jesus Christ, two opinions deserve our particular notice. One opinion supposes the Redeemer to be in a strict and literal sense the representative of the elect—and to have suffered for them, as their substitute, the penalty of the law ; and those for whom he thus suffered, are, on legal principles, eventually liberated from the curse, and restored to the favor of God. The other opinion represents the Lord Jesus as suffering, not the literal penalty of the law, but that which would furnish, in the moral government of God, an adequate and practical substitute for the infliction of this penalty upon transgressors, so far as divine mercy, in the administration of the gospel, shall interpose for their salvation ; or, in other words so far as they shall welcome, as moral and responsible agents, under the government of God, the provisions of this atonement. The distinctions here made, will be more clearly understood in the progress of the discussion which will be continued in this and the succeeding chapter.

It is supposed by some, that the atonement made by Jesus Christ, consisted in his suffering, in a strict and literal sense, the penalty of the law in the room of his people, or in the place of the elect, or those, and those only, who will be saved. To examine this position, and show its incorrectness, will claim our first attention.

And here it may be proper to premise, that the scriptures frequently describe the atonement in language of a figurative character ; and the literal con-

struction which has been put upon this language, has, no doubt, sometimes embarrassed the subject and misled the honest inquirer. We are informed by the pen of inspiration, that Christ "hath purchased" the church "with his own blood." Christians are said to be "bought with a price." Christ was "made a curse for us"—and "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." These and many other passages of similar import, are often pressed into a literal exposition, while their figurative character is entirely overlooked. When the scriptures tell us, that Christ "hath purchased" the church, or that believers, "are bought with a price," they do not intend to teach us, that the salvation of sinners through the atonement, is a pecuniary transaction, and regulated according to the principles of debt and credit ; but that their salvation was effected, in the moral government of God, by nothing less than the consideration—the stipulated consideration of the death of his beloved Son.—When it is asserted, in our text, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"—we are to understand, that Christ was himself treated as an accursed being, in his death on the cross, that the mercy of God, through this great transaction, might save the sinner from the curse, or the threatened penalty of the law. If he was made "to be sin for us," it was in a sense which consisted with perfect innocence—for he "knew no sin." He was practically treated for our sake, as if he had been 'sin' itself, sin personified ; that we might be treated for his sake as *the righteousness of God in him*. And when he suffered, it was "the *just* for the *unjust*." But some of these



passages will come under a more critical review in another place.

To these figurative expressions are superadded others of human origin—such as these : “ Christ has paid our debt—has answered the demands of the law, and satisfied the justice of God in our behalf.” If we say that Christ has paid our debt, it is true only in a figurative sense ; and can mean no more nor less than this, that the sufferings of Christ accomplished the same purpose, in the divine administration, which would have been accomplished by our rejection and punishment. If he has answered the demands of the law, or satisfied the justice of God, by the atonement, we cannot mean, that the law has really inflicted the penalty which it threatened against the transgressor, or that the divine justice took its natural course when the innocent suffered, and the guilty were spared. When theological writers use this style, or adopt this mode of representing the matter they set aside all the established notions of men respecting the divine government and moral character ; they present a theory which clashes with all settled opinions respecting guilt and innocence, and the nature and objects of punishment and pardon. The purpose or intention of the law is, no doubt, answered ; and the law-giver who is the inflexible and immaculate guardian of his own statutes, is satisfied by the atonement. He is so well satisfied, that he suspends the penalty of the law which would otherwise fall upon the sinner, and upon no one else—so well satisfied, that he arrests the hand of justice which would consign the rebel to eternal flames, and rescues this same rebel, as a penitent and believing sinner, by the intervention of his sovereign grace, in the gospel of his be-

loved Son. That Jesus Christ did not die in the strict and literal sense, as the substitute of his people, or in the room of those who will finally be saved, may be established beyond all reasonable doubt—beyond all enlightened controversy. The reader will notice the qualifying phrase here employed, “in the strict and literal sense.”

This idea of the atonement would involve a transfer of moral character, which is repugnant to the principles of reason, and at variance with the disclosures of inspiration. Those who contend, that Christ literally suffered the penalty of the law in the room of his people, in such a sense that justice has no farther demand upon them; that he paid their debt in such a sense, that they must receive a legal discharge, have contrived a kind of commutation of moral character, a sort of spiritual transfer or barter, between Christ and those for whom he died in order to justify and sustain the positions assumed in relation to the atonement. The doctrines of substitution and imputation, as they are sometimes presented in systems of theology, are intimately connected with the present discussion, and should be examined and explained in this connection. In this system, Christ is the legal substitute of the elect, and their sins are so imputed to him, that Christ becomes liable to the penalty of the law, and those for whom he suffers, are, in due time, necessarily and legally exempted from the curse which was inflicted on him. While the doctrines of substitution and imputation are unquestionably taught in the Bible, and are to be received as a part of the evangelical plan, yet they are to be explained in their appropriate relations to other doctrines, and they must not be so under-

stood as to set aside the first principles of reason and common sense. Like all other doctrines and theological terms, they are the proper subjects of exposition,—they are to be submitted to the same critical examination and to the same tests of scrutiny as any and all other doctrines of scripture. To the construction of these doctrines alluded to above, it would seem that every mind accustomed to reason, on the system of the gospel, as on other important and weighty matters, would be disposed to enter its entire and unqualified dissent. It is for ever impossible, in the very nature of things, that Christ should become liable to suffer that punishment which the law denounced against the transgressor—and against him alone. The law has no penal demand against Christ,—and such a demand it can never establish. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” is the threatening of the law. Against the innocent it contains no commination, it utters no curse; and, in this case, the law can, in strict propriety, inflict no punishment. The idea, that Christ so took the legal place of the sinner, and that the iniquities of his people were so imputed to him, that the law required his death and justice demanded the release of those for whom he died, is at once, a perversion and a blunder, unscriptural and absurd. The law can have no penal demand except against the offender. With a substitute it has no concern; and though a thousand substitutes should die, the law, in itself considered, and left to its own natural operation, would have the same demand on the transgressor which it always had. This claim can never be invalidated. This penal demand can never be extinguished. Fully aware of the truth of these positions, some have pushed the theory of sub-

stitution so far as thoroughly to meet the exigencies of the case. The sins of his people, say they, were so laid upon Christ, that he became, in the eye of the law, the sinner, and was legally punished to the full amount of all that demerit which was attached to the sins of those who will finally be saved by his blood. This is a common idea of substitution.—But this idea involves a literal transfer of characters. On this scheme Christ, and not man, is the sinner. But Christ and man cannot exchange characters, because sin and holiness are personal, and cannot be transferred from one moral being to another. The sinful or holy act of one person, may, in a thousand ways, affect another,—exert an influence upon his happiness or misery,—but it can never be so transferred as to cease to be the act of the person who performed it, and become the act of some other person who did not perform it. The Bible always represents Christ as holy, and men as unholy; and the children of God, while they have felt themselves vitally interested in the atonement made by Jesus Christ, have confessed their own sins, and relied for pardon and acceptance upon the mercy of God alone. Certainly this looks very little like having so obeyed the law and suffered its penalty, in the person of a substitute, as to be discharged, on legal principles from all guilt, and from the liability to punishment.

In what sense Christ was the sinner's substitute, and in what sense sin was imputed to Christ, will more fully appear in the progress of this discussion. Let it suffice, for the present, to remark, that whatever Christ suffered, he suffered as an innocent being—not on legal principles, but by express stipulation or covenant with the Father. He did not assume the character of the sinner, and could not, in a literal sense, endure that

curse which the law pronounces alone upon the guilty. He suffered and died, "the just for the unjust"—and those sufferings which he endured as a holy being, were intended, in the case of all those who are finally saved, as a substitute for the infliction of the penalty of the law. We say a substitute for the infliction of the penalty; for the penalty itself, if it be executed at all, must fall upon the sinner, and upon no one else. He is the only being known by the law.

To the considerations already stated it should be added, that an atonement for sin which supposes that Christ literally suffered the penalty of the law for those who will finally be saved, destroys all mercy in the Godhead. According to this system, the persons of the Trinity are not perfectly harmonious in their feelings respecting man's salvation. The eternal Father, as the guardian of the law and the governor of the universe, it would seem, has no pity for sinners and no disposition to save them, aside from the atonement; and this atonement which procures his assent to the salvation of fallen man, involves a full and literal infliction of the penalty of the law. At least, something like this representation of the affair, is given by many who have spoken and written on this subject. It is true, that their notions are not always clearly expressed, and less frequently are they traced out in all their relations, and contemplated in all their logical conclusions: if they were, they would seldom stop short of the positions here stated. As a sufficient answer to this mere human theory,—this refined speculation, let it be remembered, that if the penal denunciation of the law has been fully executed on Jesus Christ, then justice can have no additional claim upon the sinner. By one act of his literal and legal substitute every demand upon



him has been extinguished. The justice of God *must* let him go free, for justice has had its last claim.

Where then is the mercy of God,—where that rich and sovereign grace, whose praises have been sung on earth, and whose triumphs will be for ever celebrated in heaven? <sup>\*</sup>Certainly, if justice has had its full demand,—if its last uncompromising claim has been extinguished, there can be no room for the exercise of mercy.

But it may be said, in reply to all this, that the mercy to the sinner is just the same whether he be saved with or without an atonement; whether this atonement involved a literal infliction of the penalty of the law, or whether it embraced sufferings which were accepted in the place of that curse which was denounced against him as a transgressor. Be it so, that the mercy to redeemed man is the same; but by whom is this mercy exercised? Surely not by the Father of mercies. It is a vital principle of that scheme now under examination, to represent God the Father as rigidly insisting on the infliction of the whole penalty of the law, before he consents to the offer of salvation to a rebellious world. Every particle of this curse must be inflicted. Every jot and tittle of the law must be executed, and then the thoughts of mercy and pardon may begin to be entertained.

Now, if, when the penalty of the law was about to fall on sinners, the Son of God came forward and endured the exact amount of that suffering due, on legal principles, to these sinners, be the number great or small, then the whole mercy involved in their redemption is expressed by Christ alone. <sup>\*</sup>The Father as one of the persons of the Godhead, is inflexibly just without



any inclination to the exercise of mercy ; while the Son is so merciful, that he has suffered the most rigid demand of the law, in order to obtain the consent of the Father to the salvation of his people. This representation appears to us and plainly is derogatory to the character of God. It annihilates the attribute of mercy, and represents the Son as a kind of milder Deity who has interposed and answered the stern demands of the Father, in behalf of his people, or of a select and definite number of our race, and, in this way, has literally purchased them from perdition by enduring that identical perdition in their stead. The death he died was the very death threatened against them, by the law ; the pains he bore were the literal pains of their damnation. The only difference was, that he bore them in their stead.

This view of the case does not correspond with the teachings of Jesus Christ himself respecting the tender mercies and the beneficent acts of the Father. “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The love of God to our world, to a world of sinners as such, was the cause, and not the effect, of the atonement. The mercy of God needed no sacrifice in order to bring it into being, or to excite it to action. The atonement made by Christ, was not necessary for this purpose. This attribute had already fixed upon its sublime and grand design—the salvation of sinners. The penalty of the law, in the case of those who believe and are saved, is not to be inflicted. This may be looked on as the settled purpose of the God of mercy. And now the great question is, what expedient shall be adopted—what expression of the divine feelings shall be made before the eyes of the

universe, in order to guard the throne of God from encroachment, and to secure the same objects which would have been secured by the execution of the law itself? This expedient is to be found in the atonement made by Jesus Christ, the peculiar and intrinsic nature of which will be more fully illustrated in the following chapter of this work.

If Jesus Christ literally endured the penalty of the law, in the room of his people, or those who will finally be saved, then there could be no grace in their pardon and restoration to the favor of God. The notion of debt and credit furnishes a favorite mode of illustrating the doctrine of the atonement, with those who hold the system of literal and legal substitution.—Christ is said to have paid the debt for his chosen people; and, in consequence of this act of Christ, they are, on legal principles, released from future punishment. As this representation of the great work of man's recovery from sin, is entirely discarded in the view of the atonement presented in this treatise, it may be proper to examine, for a moment, the figure itself, and then its application to the case in hand.

This whole matter of debt and credit is of a pecuniary or commercial character, and may be easily understood. Your neighbor becomes indebted to you in a large amount, which he is utterly unable to pay. You resort to legal coercion—institute a prosecution, and eventually lodge him in prison. A third person, actuated by benevolence, inquires into the affair—is touched with pity for the tenant of the jail—becomes his legal surety—pays the whole demand—and restores him to personal freedom. Now on what principle is that man permitted to cross the threshold of his pris-

on? Must he come to your feet, and beg to be released; or may he boldly demand liberation on the principles of law? And when he again rejoices in the light of heaven, to whom shall he express his gratitude; to his benefactor who paid the debt, or to you who set him at liberty when the last jot and tittle of your demand was extinguished? It is manifest that you have no farther claim upon this man, because the debt is paid. The law has lost its hold upon him. He has a legal right to a discharge? and, on the score of gratitude, he is indebted to that benefactor alone who cancelled the demand by paying the debt, and not to yourself, who exacted, as the condition of his release, the last jot and tittle that the law could give you. In the whole matter of prosecution and imprisonment, you did all that the law would permit you against him; and in his enlargement from bonds, and his restoration to pardon and happiness, you did no more than you ~~was~~ compelled, by simple justice, to do. There is no mercy in the case, for the debt, let it be remembered, is paid. No part of it, in any sense, remains uncanceled. If it is justice, this is one thing—and grace is grandly another!

Apply this illustration to the doctrine of the atonement. Man had violated the law of God, and, as a transgressor, was exposed to the penalty. This penalty, according to the scheme now under consideration, the lawgiver is determined to enforce. The whole race are about to perish, when Christ suffers the exact penalty of the law for a certain part of these offenders; discharges the whole moral demand against them; and those for whom he thus suffered, are liberated from the curse, and restored to the favor and affection of

God. This representation of the atonement is noticed by THOMAS ERSKINE, Esq., of Scotland, an acute and discriminating writer "On the Internal Evidences for the truth of revealed religion." Speaking of the doctrine of the atonement, he remarks—"It has been sometimes so incautiously stated, as to give ground to cavillers for the charge that the christian scheme represents God's attribute of justice as utterly at variance with every moral principle. The allegation has assumed a form somewhat resembling this, 'that, according to christianity, God indeed apportions to every instance and degree of transgression its proper punishment; but that, while he rigidly exacts this punishment, he is not much concerned whether the person who pays it be the real criminal or an innocent being, provided only that it is a full equivalent; nay, that he is under a strange necessity to cancel guilt whenever this equivalent of punishment is tendered to him by whatever hand.' This perversion has arisen from the habit among some writers on religion of pressing too far the analogy between a crime and a pecuniary debt."

If this commercial scheme be a true and literal representation of the affair, on what principle are those persons for whom such an atonement has been made, discharged from the penalty of the law? That very threatening which the law uttered against these sinners, has been inflicted on Christ, and, by this act, the whole demand of the Father was extinguished. The law has no farther claim, and is forever satisfied. Justice has no farther claim. The whole amount of penal suffering has been endured by Jesus Christ in the character of a legal substitute; and how can law and justice open their lips against those sinners for whom Christ died?

If such an atonement as this had been made, on what principle, it might be asked, would these persons be released from future punishment? Must they beg of God to spare them from the curse of the law, and save them from going down to the prison of despair? This would be unnecessary, because it is the vital principle of this scheme, that the whole penal demand has been answered. Jesus Christ is represented as having suffered the identical amount which their sins deserved, and as the law cannot punish twice for one and the same offence, they can sustain no liability to punishment. Shall they bless God, that their sins are pardoned by his rich and abounding grace? How can grace or pardon consist with such an atonement as is here described? What grace or favor did you grant your debtor, when you released him from prison, after his surety had paid all the demand?—None at all. You did only that which the law would compel you to do. You liberated the debtor when the whole amount was discharged, and when he was no longer a debtor, in the judgment of the law. And if Christ has suffered that very penalty involved in the eternal condemnation of his people, as some contend, then they ought to be liberated on the principles of law. Their debt is paid. The law has no farther demand; and grace and pardon are out of the question. There is but one being in the universe to whom these persons would be indebted for their release; and that is the friend who paid their debt, or suffered the penalty of the law in their stead. Christ, in distinction from the Father, is their only gracious Benefactor.

A moment's reflection will teach us, that this is not the representation of the atonement given in the bible.

Notwithstanding what Christ has done, in order to prepare the way for man's salvation, we are every where taught, that we are saved by grace, and that a free pardon is consistent with full atonement for sin. "Being justified *freely* BY HIS GRACE through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." We need no other proof than that suggested in this passage, that Christ did not pay the debt, or literally suffer the penalty of the law for his people. He prepared the way for our debt to be remitted ; or in plain language, dispensing with all metaphor, he made it consistent and proper and honorable for sin to be forgiven according to the prescribed terms of the gospel. The objection against the scheme that Christ literally endured the penalty of the law in the room of his people, that it precludes the idea of grace in their restoration to the favor of God, is answered in something like the following manner by those who hold to this doctrine. The grace consisted in providing an atonement, and in Christ's suffering the punishment due to his people as sinners. The reward was due to Christ, and this reward is made over to his people by an act of grace.

The great objection against this theory is, that it does not correspond with the bible. The gift of Christ as Mediator, it is true, was the unspeakable gift ; and the sufferings of Christ for men, were the effect of sovereign love ; but all this does not save the sinner. The way is only prepared. The door is open. Mercy can now operate. But the sinner is still under condemnation : and if he is saved at all, he must be saved as much by an act of free grace as if no atonement had been made. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Sinners, that



is, penitent and believing sinners, are "justified freely by his grace," and they receive "the forgiveness of sins" through the atonement. And these acts of acquittal and forgiveness, are subsequent to, and distinct from, the atonement itself. On the principle of a legal substitution and a literal infliction of the penalty of the law, the atonement would bring no accession of happiness to the universe. The system which is now under consideration represents the Lord Jesus Christ in the work of redemption, as making an atonement for a definite number of our race. These persons are the elect, or those who will finally be saved. This atonement by which they are to be saved, consisted in Christ's taking on himself their personal guilt, and thus enduring the penalty of the law in their stead. It is not considered enough, on this plan, for him to suffer what would answer in the place of the infliction of the penalty; but he must receive in his own person, the identical curse which they deserved, and which they had incurred by their sins. The amount of Christ's sufferings must consequently be the same as the aggregate sufferings included in the eternal condemnation of all those who are saved by his merit.—There was first a literal transfer of all their sins to Christ which rendered him legally bound to suffer their punishment, and then each and all of these sins were expiated upon the cross by his enduring the original penalty which was threatened in the law. The agonies which he suffered were equal to the endless misery of all those who will be saved by his interposition in their behalf.

To this view of the atonement, it may be farther objected, that it annihilates the last particle of benevolence in the gospel. If Christ suffered the same misery

in kind and degree that was due to the whole number who will finally be saved, and which they must have suffered, in their future and eternal condemnation, where are the indications of that wisdom and goodness which have ever been considered prominent features in the system of the gospel? It has generally been supposed, that the gospel is the grand device of heaven for preventing misery and for increasing happiness among the rational creatures of God. But if Christ suffered all that the law would inflict to eternity upon the vessels of mercy, then there is no gain on the principles of general benevolence. The same misery is endured, in the rational system, which would have been endured, had the whole race of Adam perished without the provisions of the gospel. Satan has met with no signal defeat. If he has not literally accomplished the ruin of the whole family of man, he has accomplished that which amounts to the same thing, and his purposes are substantially answered. He has secured a part of the human race, as the victims of despair, and for those who are rescued from his grasp, he has received a full equivalent. In the place of the eternal misery of each redeemed soul, he has seen the same amount of suffering, both in nature and degree, inflicted on the Son of God.—This is by no means such a triumph over Satan as the Bible describes. This is not such a gospel as inspiration reveals. A system which prevents no misery, and which brings no accession to the happiness of the universe—a system whose grand and distinctive characteristic is that it devises a way in which the innocent may suffer a certain amount of misery which was due to the guilty, would hardly excite, as the gospel does, the wonder and admiration of the an-

gels in heaven. Read the parable of the lost sheep, and you will learn, that the plan of redemption will increase, as it was designed to do, the happiness of the universe. Read almost any page of the New Testament, and you may infer the same truth which the apostle Paul distinctly expresses, in his Epistle to the Ephesians—that “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” learn “by the church the MANIFOLD WISDOM of God.” And who can believe that this “wisdom,” in its highest aspirations, has aimed at nothing more sublime, and, in its most holy and happy achievement, has accomplished nothing more benevolent, than to transfer an amazing amount of divine wrath from the guilty to the innocent? Would such a plan, and its accomplishment, impart new rapture to the songs, and sweeter melody to the harps of heaven? Would such a work, when projected, be pronounced the masterpiece of the great moral architect, and, at the crisis of its consummation, inspire a shout of triumph which shall roll through the length and breadth of the universe? These things the gospel has done and will do; and we may confidently infer that it is something more elevated in its aims, and more beneficent in its results, than the mere commercial transaction here described. The true plan is discernibly full of grace and glory.

But this point ought not to be dismissed here. Can the scheme adverted to above, be indeed the gospel scheme? Are these, then, the boasted triumphs of divine grace, that it has devised a way in which divine grace is vacated, as the innocent may sustain a certain amount of suffering due to the guilty, and the guilty escape merited punishment? Let the question be

fairly met. If Jesus Christ has endured, in his own person, the pains of damnation awarded by the decisions of law to those who will finally be redeemed, or if he has endured an amount of misery equal to those pains, it would seem to be a clear case, that not one particle of penal evil is prevented. A mere commutation is all that has been effected. Those sufferings have been inflicted on Jesus Christ, in making the atonement, which would otherwise have been endured by his people in perdition. The amount of suffering, let it be remembered, is the same. In what then consists the benevolence of this grand device of heaven? Certainly not in the diminution of misery in the universe! Not one grain is abated or annihilated. Sinners who will finally be lost, will endure, in their own persons, the full penalty of the law; and the full penalty of the same law due to those who are saved, was sustained by Jesus Christ in their stead. Will it be replied, that those who are saved, will be more happy, possibly, than they would have been if they had never sinned and had never been redeemed? This may be granted. But it is equally true, that many sinners will be more miserable in eternity, than they would have been, had there been no atonement, and no gospel. Should it be still farther asserted, that the gospel scheme, and especially the grand feature of the gospel, the atonement, will augment the happiness of all holy beings,—this too, may be cheerfully conceded. This effect will be produced, however, by the contemplation of its benevolent features. The moral power of the gospel to diminish sin and misery, and not the fact, that it is a device for the infliction of the same amount of evil upon the innocent which was due to the guilty,

is what strings the harps, and swells the songs, of heaven! Every good being in the universe, is, no doubt, made more and more happy as he witnesses the benevolent disclosures of this system. God and angels and saints rejoice together in its progress and in its triumphs. But it may admit of a doubt whether this would be the case, if the gospel could establish no higher claim to admiration, than, that it had transferred a definite portion of penal evil from one part of the universe to another,—from the unjust to the just,—from sinners to their substitute. A mere *quid-pro-quo* transaction! It may be objected to the general course of reasoning adopted in this discussion, and particularly, to the argument distinctly stated under the present head, that it is not contended, that the penalty of the law was, in a strict and literal sense, inflicted on Christ. To this objection it may be replied, that the doctrine is thus stated and defended by many speakers and writers. It is frequently proclaimed from the pulpit, and the sentiment may be found distinctly expressed in a great variety of publications both of ancient and modern date, that Christ sustained the exact amount of misery due to those who are to be saved by his blood. It is true, that men who have candidly examined the objections which are urged against this scheme, have, particularly of late, adopted a qualified mode of expression in relation to this point. They contend, that the real penalty of the law was inflicted on Christ; and, at the same time, acknowledge, that the sufferings of Christ were not the same, either in nature or degree, as those sufferings which were threatened against the transgressor. The declaration of Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, that “Christ hath redeemed us from



the curse of the law being made a curse for us," is considered by some as furnishing unequivocal proof of the fact, that he endured the full and identical penalty of the law in the room of his people. But it is, in no shape or manner, asserted here, that the Son of God suffered the penalty of the law. The apostle is very particular to tell us in what sense he was "made a curse for us;" "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Was this the penalty of the law, or a substituted suffering as well as a substituted sufferer? Does the law say, "the soul that sinneth, it shall—— hang on a tree?" or is this plainly, and palpably, and immensely, ANOTHER KIND OF DEATH, in form, duration, and circumstances? If so, it is not the penalty of the law. It is a *curse*, but not THE CURSE of the law. Believers are saved from the curse or penalty of the law by the consideration that Christ was "made a curse" for them, in another and a very different sense. He was "made a curse" inasmuch as he suffered, in order to open the door of hope to man, the pains and shame, and ignominy of crucifixion. He hung upon a tree. He died as a malefactor. He expired as one accursed. In the last dark hour of mortal agony he appeared abandoned, not only of man, but of God. If the declaration, that Christ was "made a curse for us," proves, that he suffered the penalty of the law, then it must, at the same time, prove, by the principles of legitimate exposition, that the penalty of the law was *crucifixion*; for it is written, in the same connection, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But the penalty of the law was damnation, or eternal death; and this was threatened against the transgressor alone,



and could, in justice, be inflicted on no one else ; certainly not on celestial innocence in human form !

As to the declaration, that Christ actually suffered the penalty of the law, in the place of his people, and yet did not sustain, either in nature or degree, that misery which the law denounced and their sins deserved, it appears a direct contradiction in terms. The penalty of the law was something definite. It embraced sufferings of a certain kind, and it extended those sufferings to certain fixed and settled limits. Now if, while Christ was suffering, he endured a misery essentially different, in its character, from that which was threatened in the penalty of the law, and if it differed no less in its degree than its nature, how could it be, in any sense, an infliction of the threatened curse ? The thing is impossible. If God had threatened to inflict a certain kind and a certain degree of penal evil upon the transgressor, can we say that this identical curse was executed because an innocent being sustained a different kind and a different degree of suffering ? The position is utterly absurd, and it is abandoned in the very terms in which it is expressed. How can we affirm that it is the same penalty, when it is acknowledged that both its character and quantity are different, and the subject upon whom it is inflicted is not only a different one from that contemplated in the law, or known to the law, but sustaining a moral character directly the reverse of that against which the penalty is uttered. There is inherent contradiction in such a scheme, and it hardly seems possible, that a well trained and logical mind should entertain it for a moment. There are but two theories respecting the nature of the atonement, which have any claim to self-consistency.

One is, that Christ suffered, in the most strict and literal sense, the penalty of the law for his people, and the other, that his sufferings were a substitute for the penalty of the law, which, if executed, would have been the measure of their punishment, and the perdition of mankind.

The first of these theories we have seen is utterly at war with the bible and common sense. And yet it is far more consistent with itself, than that mixed theory which many have been compelled of late to adopt in order to shield themselves from the arguments of their opponents. We mean that sentiment which declares that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for his people, and yet he did not suffer it in nature or degree. That is, he suffered something essentially different from the penalty, and yet this was the penalty itself!

In a sermon by Dr. Dana, of Londonderry, we find this sentiment: "In as much as the Scripture expressly declares that, in redeeming us from the law, he was made a curse for us, we are constrained to conclude, that his sufferings were a substantial execution of the law; a real endurance of the penalty, so far as the nature of the case admitted, or required." In another place he says, "We contend not that the Redeemer endured precisely the same misery in kind and degree to which the sinner was exposed."

The penalty of the law either *was* or was *not* inflicted on the Lord Jesus Christ. If it was inflicted, then it must have been inflicted in kind and degree. If not, then his sufferings were something specifically different from the penalty. To talk of "a real endurance of the penalty, so far as the nature of the case admitted, or required," is to say that it was not "a REAL endurance

of the penalty," because "the nature of the case" did not admit or require it.

But why is it necessary to support the position, that the curse of the law was inflicted on Christ? If it should be said, that the divine veracity was pledged to execute the law—we reply, that the divine veracity can find no support in that kind of infliction of the curse which is here supposed. "A substantial execution of the law"—an "endurance of the penalty, so far as the nature of the case admitted, or required"—an infliction of suffering and punishment, not upon the transgressor, but upon a surety, when the law had not made the most distant allusion to a surety, certainly has much more the appearance of an *evasion* of the law, than the *execution* of it. If both the nature and degree of sufferings involved in the penalty of the law, may be dispensed with, on the same principle, the penalty itself may be set aside, provided the glory of the law-giver and the happiness of the universe can be secured in some other way. The moment a man admits, that Christ did not suffer, in the most rigid sense, the penalty of the law—that his misery was not the same in nature and degree which the law had threatened—that he did not suffer the same punishment which would have been inflicted upon those who will finally be saved, and that the atonement was not, in every feature of it, a "quid pro quo" transaction—a commercial transaction—a transaction for value received—that moment he admits a principle which is utterly at war with the theory of legal substitution and the literal infliction of penalty; and he will never be able to make his system correspond each and every part with the whole till he adopts that view of the media-

tion of Christ which will be drawn out in detail, and fully discussed, in the next chapter.

It may not be improper to remark, in this connection, that incorrect views of the nature of the atonement, have frequently led to deep and fundamental errors in religion. A denial of the fact of a propitiation for sin is commonly the first step towards the rejection of the bible as containing a revelation from God. The admission or denial of this cardinal sentiment, will give form and feature to our whole system of theological views. The same remark will apply, with some qualification, to the opinions which we entertain respecting the *nature* of the atonement. If, for instance, we adopt the sentiment of legal substitution, and say, that Christ literally sustained the penalty of the law, in the room of a precise and definite number of our race, how perfectly easy and natural it is to adopt the deduction, that these persons are saved by an act of justice? Each and all of their sins, to the full extent of their demerit, have been punished in the person of a legal sponsor, and now the law has no farther demand. Indeed, in these circumstances, justice calls for the release of those who have been punished in the person of their accepted substitute, because her last claim against them was extinguished when Christ expired on the cross. To condemn these persons now would be an act of injustice. Whether such a sentiment as this, or a sentiment leading to such conclusions, is calculated to excite humility in the bosom of the sinner, let the considerate and candid judge for themselves.

But transitions, in theology, from one kindred error to another, are imperceptible and easy. And so it happens in the case before us. This system supposes

not only a spiritual identity, but certainly, as held and taught by many, an eternal union between the Savior and those for whom he died. What he did, they themselves have performed ; what he suffered under the penal exactions of the law, they also suffered. In consequence of a legal oneness, they are not only released from punishment by an act of law, but in Christ Jesus they are literally justified,—not merely pardoned, and graciously restored to favor, but LEGALLY acquitted and saved. We have now arrived within the precincts of antinomianism, than which a sorer evil or a grosser error has rarely ever afflicted the church of God. A few lines more will finish the picture. Only let it be understood, that Christ has so obeyed the law, in the place of his people, that they are released from legal obligation—and so suffered its penalty, in their stead, that they are legally exempted from punishment and have a legal claim to eternal life, and you have presented before you a full length figure embracing outline and filling up, form and feature, of that production upon whose forehead ORTHODOXY is inscribed, in broad capitals, and which carries in its bosom a proud and unsanctified and impious heart. This is the enemy of God under the specious garb of peculiar zeal for “the faith once delivered to the saints ;” but so little accordant is its spirit with the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that it can hardly, like another grand enemy of God, claim the merit of being arrayed in the imposing robes of “an angel of light.”

We may learn, likewise, from this discussion, in what sense we are to understand substitution and imputation. It may be objected by some that the positions taken above involve the denial of both of these

doctrines. But the correctness of this assertion cannot be admitted. Substitution is an essential part of that scheme of man's recovery maintained in this treatise. The true view of it is our glory and our hope. The atonement was a substitute for the infliction of the penalty of the law—or the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the punishment of sinners. In the case of all believers, and such and such only will be saved, the misery which Christ endured, is the real and only ground of their release, because without these sufferings, or the atonement, there could have been no pardon or grace for sinners. He suffered what was necessary to be endured, in order to bring a rebellious world within the reach of mercy. Thus, in the administration of the divine government, the sufferings of Christ occupy the place of the eternal condemnation of every ransomed soul;—that is, of every penitent and believing sinner—of every child of Adam who accepts of proffered mercy. This is vicarious suffering. It is the suffering of Christ in the place of the endless punishment of the sinner. Here, then, is substitution in the true and full scriptural sense; and it is an essential part of the doctrine of the atonement, the outline of which has been already presented, but the distinctive features of which will be described hereafter. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Here is substitution in a two-fold sense. In the first place, Jesus Christ is a substituted *person*. He stood in the sinner's place; and it was in this new relation to God and man and the universe, that he made an atonement for sin. He was himself a substitute,—the sinner's



substitute. In the second place, his sufferings were *substituted sufferings*. In that plan of moral government by which sinners are saved from death, they took the place of the eternal punishment of these sinners. In one word *suffering* is substituted for *punishment*. We have a substituted person, and substituted suffering ; and the doctrine of substitution is not given up, but established, and that in its true nature and on its own impregnable foundation.

As to imputation, it is denied, in this treatise, that the sins of man, or of any part of our race, were so transferred to Christ, that they became his sins, or were so reckoned to him that he sustained their legal responsibilities, or suffered their legal punishment. But does this involve the denial—or only the illustration or the doctrine of imputation? Jesus Christ, in order to save men, suffered without having sinned ; and as his sufferings answered all the practical purposes of the sinner's punishment, and are the sole ground of his pardon, and acceptance with God, it may be said in relation to all believers, that their sins were imputed or reckoned to Christ, and that his righteousness is imputed or reckoned to them. In other words, the sufferings of Christ form the basis of the sinner's salvation. He endured all that was necessary to answer and honor the spirit and demands of the law ; and the penitent, believing and pardoned sinner reaps the joyful harvest,—the salvation of his soul. In this sense, imputation is the doctrine of the Bible. As it respects the results, Christ was treated as a sinner,—that is, he suffered being innocent, and the sinner is treated as if he were holy,—that is, he is freely pardoned in connection with

what Christ has done. And to this effect are the words of the apostle, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT CONTINUED.

FEW things have a more deep and extensive influence on our religious opinions than the ideas we entertain respecting the atonement made by Jesus Christ. Having first of all endeavored to establish the necessity of a propitiation for sin, the attention of the reader was then directed to the fact that the Bible expressly reveals this doctrine ; and in the preceding chapter the investigation of its nature was commenced. Two opinions, in relation to this branch of the subject, and which differ materially from each other, were there mentioned as having a special claim on our serious consideration. One opinion represents the Lord Jesus Christ as the legal substitute of the elect—as having suffered, in this character, the exact penalty of the law in their stead—and as having released them, on the principles of formal and strict justice, from that curse which was pronounced upon them as transgressors. This representation of the nature of the atonement has been shown to be inadmissible, on the following grounds.

Such a satisfaction as is here defined would imply an exchange or transfer of moral character between Christ and those for whom he died. Christ could not be punished, on legal principles, till he was guilty in the eye of the law—and his people could not be justified by the principles of the law, till its penalty was literally inflicted. This transfer of character so as to render Jesus Christ the sinner, and the soul for whom he died, innocent, appears to us without foundation in reason or scripture. The same system would destroy all mercy in God the Father, in the salvation of sinners, because it represents God as totally disinclined to the exercise of compassion, till every jot and tittle of the legal curse was inflicted. On the same principle grace or pardon in the release of the sinner from future punishment, would be out of the question—for what grace, or pardon, or favor, can there be in the discharge of a debtor whose demand has been cancelled to the “uttermost farthing?” And as to the benevolence of the gospel, it is impossible to discover how such a feature can consist with that idea of the atonement which represent Christ as having suffered the same quantity of penal evil which would have been embraced in the future condemnation of all those who will be redeemed by his sacrifice. What wisdom or benevolence can there be in a plan or expedient which shall inflict a certain degree of suffering upon the innocent who could never deserve it, in order to spare the guilty from precisely the same degree of suffering, and to which, too, their sins had justly exposed them? Thus far has the inquiry respecting the nature of the atonement been already prosecuted. The other view of this doctrine which has been stated, and which will now come under

consideration, represents the Lord Jesus Christ as suffering, not the literal penalty of the law, but that which will fully vindicate the divine character and support the divine government, while God, at the same time, offers pardon and eternal life to the sinner, and actually secures these blessings to every one who complies with the terms or conditions on which they are offered. This, it is apprehended can easily be shown to be the only rational idea of the atonement, and the one too which corresponds with the representations of this subject as presented in the Holy Scriptures.

This subject is discussed in his usual masterly manner by the apostle Paul, in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. In the introduction to this consecutive and logical treatise, he gives us a graphical description of the deplorable state of mankind as rebels against God ; and after declaring unequivocally the impossibility of justification by the deeds of the law, he adverts to that plan of restoration which is revealed in the gospel. This plan was contrived for sinners. Justification is by grace, and yet this grace is expressed through an atonement. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ." Whatever this price of redemption offered by Jesus Christ is, it certainly does not so answer the penal demands of the law, as to discharge the sinner, or to admit of his restoration to the favor of God on any other principle than that of grace alone. This "propitiation" God hath set forth, or exhibited to the universe, to declare his righteousness ; "that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." The object of the atonement is here stated in explicit terms. It was required and made in order to

open a consistent way for the publication of pardon, or for the exercise of grace to sinners. Its purpose was to declare the "righteousness" or moral rectitude and perfection of God in dispensing, in this instance, with the literal execution of the penalty of the law, and in bestowing eternal life upon those who deserved to die. This satisfaction was required, that God might be "just"—just to himself as the moral governor, and just or faithful to the interests of the universe over which he presides, even in justifying and saving the believing sinner.

But a more clear and satisfactory illustration of this idea of the atonement, will be attempted in answer to the following inquiries. What were the feelings of God toward our fallen world, without respect to a propitiation? Why was not pardon absolute, without any connection with a sacrifice for sin? And how did the atonement made by Christ, prepare the way for the exercise of mercy to sinners?

What were the feelings of God toward our fallen world, without respect to a propitiation for sin? The representation which has often been made of the divine character, as connected with the moral law and the doctrine of the atonement, we have often thought highly derogatory to the Godhead. The eternal Father is exhibited before us, as a being of unbending justice, and as determined, at all events, to maintain the honor of the law by inflicting the last particle of penal evil which it has denounced against the sinner. The mercy exhibited in the gospel, is considered an attribute or feeling altogether superinduced by the propitiatory sacrifice which was offered by Jesus Christ. When all the suffering which was included in the penalty of the



law, had been endured by a substitute, then and not till then, is the compassion of God excited for perishing sinners. This description poorly corresponds with that character of God which is delineated in the Bible. All his attributes are independent of time and circumstance. The scriptures teach us, that God was inclined to mercy, in his treatment of our apostate world, irrespective of any atonement or satisfaction whatever. So far from being the effect or consequence, mercy is the exciting and efficient cause of that propitiation which was made in the person of Jesus Christ. "For God so LOVED THE WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God was not only inclined to exhibit the attribute of mercy, in our world, but he positively and irreversibly determined, in his own infinite mind, to unfold this perfection here below, and to rescue multitudes of our race from the curse of that law which they had violated. This feeling of compassion, in Jehovah, was infinitely strong; this determination to save sinners, was settled and eternal. It is the deliberate purpose of God to set aside the penalty of the law, at least, so far as it respects the salvation of many sinners in our world. Mercy is to be displayed and glorified in the salvation of men; and the grand question now is, not what shall be done to excite the compassion of God for a ruined world, but in what way shall that eternal love which is in active operation, be expressed, so as to shield the sinner from the curse of the law, on the one hand, and to secure the divine honor and integrity, on the other?—

But this leads us to the second inquiry proposed:—

why was not pardon absolute, without any connection with a sacrifice for sin? Finite minds should speak, and even think, with reverence and caution of the processes of the infinite mind; hence it would be bold and presumptuous for man to undertake to determine and explain all the reasons which may have influenced the counsels of God in requiring the atonement. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.'—Some of these reasons, however, lie within the reach of the human powers, and others have been made the theme of special revelation; and they have been glanced at in the chapter on the necessity of a propitiation for sin. Without traversing again the field then trodden, a few considerations may here be suggested in answer to the inquiry stated above. The spirit of the inquiry is this.—If sinners are to be saved by grace, and by grace alone, why was not pardon or forgiveness directly and absolutely bestowed upon them, without the intervention or sufferings of a mediator? To the humble christian we might reply, that this was not the plan of salvation adopted by infinite wisdom—and this reply to such an one, would be deemed sufficient. The Bible has so informed us. If any, however, are still disposed to push the inquiry, why pardon could not have been extended to the sinner without an atonement, the reply is, that there was the same necessity for an atonement that there originally was for the penalty of the moral law; the same reason there is, that this penalty should be executed upon the transgressor.

The penalty of the moral law was intended to operate as a powerful motive to obedience; and the execution of this penalty, whenever it takes place in

the universe, becomes an awful warning to deter others from transgression. Now if the penalty of the law were never to be executed, its whole moral power or authority would be annihilated. It would become more feeble and inefficient, than if no threatening had ever been annexed. If the order and happiness of the universe, under the moral government of God, require laws with suitable penal sanctions, and require, too, that these laws be executed ; then it would seem, that, whenever pardon is to take the place of the penalty of the law, a substitute for the execution of the threatened curse, would be proper, in order to preserve the divine authority from aspersion, and to guard the throne of heaven from encroachment. Should it still be urged, that human governments frequently grant absolute pardons, or exempt the criminal from the legal penalty without any reference to a propitiation, the answer is, that from the imperfection of human governments, this may sometimes be the best thing which can be done ; but every interference with the direct operation of the law, weakens its authority, and gives countenance to crime. It is a well known fact, that in every country, offences abound in direct proportion to the difficulty of conviction, and the facility of pardon. In the moral government of God, which is the only perfect government in the universe, the penalty of the law is always equally important and necessary ; and in case this penalty is to be set aside and not executed, in any particular instance, there is the same necessity that the moral governor should furnish a public substitute for the infliction of the curse, as there was that the law should originally include a penal sanction. The conclusion from this mode of reasoning would be, that in

the government of God, pardon could never be granted, except through the intervention of an adequate atonement; that is, the penalty of the moral law could never be set aside without the adoption of those precautionary measures which would secure the order and prosperity of the universe, as effectually, to say the least, as the infliction of the penal curse itself could do. Under this government, then, we may always expect the infliction of the penalty according to its original and literal intention, or an adequate atonement, as a succedaneum or substitute.

But how did the atonement made by Jesus Christ, prepare the way for the exercise of mercy to sinners?

That the object of the atonement was, not to pay our debt, or to obliterate our guilt, but to prepare the way for a free pardon, and a gracious acceptance with God, appears from the whole drift of the Apostle's reasoning, in the paragraph to which reference has already been made in this chapter. Sinners are represented as being justified freely by grace, and yet this is effected through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. God required an atonement, that he might declare his "righteousness," or the moral propriety of his administration, in saving sinners—"that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"—in other words, that God might be both just and merciful.

This is the proper place to inquire in what sense the justice of God was satisfied by the atonement made by Jesus Christ. That very incorrect ideas are not unfrequently attached to this expression,—ideas entirely different from those intended to be conveyed by the Apostle in the passage referred to, and in which he represents the atonement as a declaration of "the righteous-

ness of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," there can be but little doubt. The term *justice*, it should be remembered, is used in different senses. Its legal acceptance, or its use as connected with the operation of law, is twofold, which critical writers have distinguished by the epithets of commutative and distributive. Commutative justice, which may with equal propriety be styled pecuniary or commercial justice, is wholly confined to the regulation of property and the payment of debts.—It is hardly necessary to say, that this kind of justice can have nothing to do with a violation of the moral law, or with that atonement which has been made for sinners by Jesus Christ. And yet, plain as the case is, many have been misled and bewildered by placing a literal construction upon the figurative language of the scriptures in relation to this transaction. The august business which involved the honor of the divine government, the death of the Son of God and the redemption of immortal man, is degraded to the level of a pecuniary transaction,—is brought down to a mere matter of debt and credit. The declaration ought to be repeated, and the truth contained in it never forgotten, that commutative justice has nothing to do with the affair. It is not a pecuniary or commercial transaction. If the blood of Christ, or the atonement, is the *price* of our redemption, it must be so in this sense, that it furnishes a consistent ground for our free pardon and gracious acceptance. It is the condition or consideration which rendered the salvation of sinners practicable; and in this sense, it may with propriety be called the *price* of pardon,—the price of redemption,—the price of heaven.

Distributive justice respects the moral character and conduct of creatures individually considered, and consists in rewarding, or punishing them severally according to their merit or demerit. Now this kind of justice has a connection with the subject of the atonement, or in other words, the atonement is a transaction which has intimate and vital relations with moral character and conduct. Many of the difficulties attending this subject, may, no doubt, be settled at once if we can determine the question whether distributive justice was or was not, satisfied by the death of Christ. Many contend, that this is the fact. Man had broken the law of God—Christ became his substitute—stood in his place—and was punished to the full extent of the penalty of the law. In consequence of this vicarious sacrifice, man is acquitted by the law, because justice is satisfied, and there is no farther penal demand against him. This is the representation sometimes, and not unfrequently, given of the atonement. But can this statement of the affair be defended on the principles of distributive justice?—Certainly not. In the transaction under consideration, neither Christ nor the sinner is treated according to his character, or according to the terms or principles of the moral law. Christ had perfectly and uniformly obeyed the law, and by this law he must be justified, and not condemned and punished. On the other hand, the sinner had violated the moral law, and this law could never acquit him. The death of Christ, in itself considered, had no influence upon the moral character of the sinner. He may, by the grace of God, be rescued and saved through this death, but in the eye of the law he is still a sinner and deserves to be punished. The law knows nothing of



punishing the innocent and acquitting the guilty. The principles of distributive justice sternly forbid it. The idea of such a substitution and imputation, as would render Christ guilty and the sinner holy, has been considered on a former occasion—and may with safety be pronounced unworthy of a place in a system of enlightened theology. The conclusion then is, that distributive justice, or justice in its common and appropriate sense, in relation to rewards and punishments, was not satisfied by the atonement made by Jesus Christ. The moral law, when violated, has but one demand, and that demand is the death of the transgressor. But in the gospel, of which the atonement is an essential part, the principles of distributive justice are overruled or set aside. The innocent and meritorious suffers, and the guilty is screened from punishment. This is a sovereign act of God as the moral governor. Should it be again asked—if the arm of distributive justice can be arrested, and is to be arrested, and the law that threatened, in this instance, is not to inflict the curse,—why was not this sovereign and special interposition so managed as not to involve the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ? We must here recur to the doctrine which has been already stated and defended, that the penalty of the law is essential to the existence and happiness of a moral government; and the only method in which the execution of this penalty can be suspended, is to furnish an adequate and practical, and public substitute in its place. The ends or objects of distributive justice must be secured. And this substitute by which these ends or objects are effectually accomplished, is to be found in that atonement which is revealed in the gospel.

But there is a third sense in which the term justice is frequently used, and the consideration of which will lead us directly to the nature of that satisfaction which Jesus Christ has made for sinners ; we mean what is commonly denominated general or public justice. In order to distinguish it both from pecuniary and legal justice, it has been called moral justice. In this acceptance, it has no direct reference to law, but embraces those principles of virtue or benevolence by which we are bound to govern our conduct ; and by which God himself governs the universe. It is in this sense that the terms *δίκαιον*, "just," and *δικαιοσύνη*, "righteousness," occur in the passage cited from Paul to the Romans. These terms are precisely of the same import except one is a substantive and the other an adjective ; and in this connection they stand directly related to the atonement. The apostle teaches us, that God required a propitiation for sin, that he might declare his righteousness or justice ; that he might be righteous or just, and "the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." Now we conceive, that this passage, thus explained, throws much light upon the nature of that satisfaction which Christ has rendered to the justice of God. This atonement was required, that God might be "just," or righteous, that is, that he might do the thing which was fit and proper, and best and most expedient to be done ; and, at the same time, be perfectly at liberty to justify, "him which believeth in Jesus." Thus the legal obstacle to man's salvation was removed by the sacrifice of Christ. The whole doctrine of the atonement, so far at least as its nature is concerned, can now be placed before the reader in a few words. Commutative justice was not satisfied by the atonement, be-

cause the whole transaction was of a moral and not of a commercial character. Distributive justice was not satisfied by this transaction, because the innocent suffered, in order to open a way for the pardon of the guilty. The penalty of the law, strictly speaking, was not inflicted at all ; for this penalty in which was embodied the principles of distributive justice, required the death of the sinner, and did not require the death of Christ. As a substitute for the infliction of this penalty, God did accept of the sufferings of his Son. The relation of the sinner to the curse which this law pronounces against the transgressor, is legally—not evangelically—just the same which it was without an atonement. He is the same guilty creature that he was before satisfaction was made. The law has the same demand upon him, and utters the same denunciation of wrath against him. The law, or justice, that is distributive justice, as expressed in the law, has received no satisfaction at all.—The whole legal system has been suspended, at least, for the present, in order to make way for the operation of one of a different character. In introducing this system of mercy, which involves a suspension of the penal curse, God has required a satisfaction to the principles of general or public justice—a satisfaction which will effectually secure all the good to the universe which is intended to be accomplished by the penalty of the law when inflicted, and, at the same time, prevent all that practical mischief which would result from arresting the hand of punitive justice without the intervention of atonement. God can now be “just”—that is, he can secure his own honour as the lawgiver, and promote the best interests of his universal empire, and, at the same time, stay the

curse of the violated law, and extend pardon to the chief of sinners. This was the great desideratum in order to bring consolation and hope to a dying world. This could not have been done without the atonement of Christ ; for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” These views of the atonement are clearly stated and ably defended by the Rev. Dr. Dwight, in the Sixty Fourth Sermon in his System of Theology. “Christ in his sufferings and death made a complete atonement for the sins of mankind. In other words, he rendered to the law, character, and government, of God, such peculiar honor, as to make it consistent with their unchangeable nature and glory, that sinners should, on the proper conditions, be FORGIVEN. But the atonement inferred no obligation of justice, on the part of God to forgive them. They were still sinners, after the atonement, in the same sense, and in the same degree, as before. In no degree were they less guilty, or less deserving of punishment.

“The supposition, incautiously admitted by some divines, that Christ satisfied the demands of the law by his active and passive obedience, in the same manner as the payment of a debt satisfies the demands of a creditor, has, if I mistake not, been heretofore proved to be unfounded in the scriptures. We owed God our obedience, and not our property ; and obedience in its own nature is due from the subject himself, and can never be rendered by another. In refusing to render it we are criminal ; and for this criminality merit punishment. The guilt, thus incurred, is inherent in the criminal himself, and cannot in the nature of things be transferred to another. All that, in this case, can be done by a substitute, of whatever character, is to ren-

der it not improper for the lawgiver to pardon the transgressor. No substitute can, by any possible effort, make him cease to be guilty, or to deserve punishment. This (and I intend to say it with becoming reverence) is beyond the ability of Omnipotence itself. The fact, that he is guilty, is past ; and can never be recalled.

“ Thus it is evident, that the sinner, when he comes before God, comes in the character of a sinner only ; and must, if strict justice be done, be therefore condemned. If he escape condemnation, then, he can derive these blessings from mere mercy only, and in no degree from justice. In other words, every blessing which he receives, is a free gift. The pardon of his sins, his acquittal from condemnation, and his admission to the enjoyments of heaven, are all given to him freely, and graciously, because God regards him with infinite compassion, and is therefore pleased to communicate to him these unspeakable favours.”

If the views which we have stated of the nature of the atonement be correct, then the demands of the law upon the sinner, remain unimpaired and undiminished. This declaration is true, as it respects both the precept and the penalty. And yet there is a strong tendency in almost every human heart, to feel a kind of security from the mere consideration that Christ has died for sinners. The fact, that he expired upon the cross in order to open the door of mercy to a ruined world, ought, no doubt, to be the cause of ardent and eternal gratitude. It should fill the earth, as well as heaven with rapturous songs. But on this fact the unbeliever, continuing such, has no right to build his hope. As we are liable to receive incorrect impressions of the atonement, and to derive from it a security which it

was never intended in itself to inspire—let us examine, for a moment, the condition of man notwithstanding the sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ upon Calvary! What is there in this sacrifice which has impaired the demands of the law upon the sinner?—or changed his heart? Whether we consider the obedience of Christ to the preceptive requirement, or his death as a substitute for its penalty, we can find nothing which repeals the original injunction, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.” Now this precept stands, and will forever stand, just as it would if no atonement had ever been made.

But we are still more liable to ascribe to the atonement an influence over the penalty of the law which it never possessed, and which, in accordance with the principles of moral government, it never could possess. There is a secret and perpetual recurrence to the idea that Christ has paid the demand, or suffered the penalty of the law, so that its claims are now quieted and the sentence of condemnation repealed. But this is a fundamental, and may prove a fatal error. There is nothing in the character of Christ’s sufferings which can affect or modify the penalty of the law. These sufferings were not legal. They constituted no part of that curse which was threatened against the transgressor; neither do they insure, in a single instance, aside from the stipulations of the covenant of redemption, the repeal of that curse as it respects the sinner. His moral character while he continues in impenitence and unbelief, is just what it would have been, if no atonement had ever been made. He is just as much the slave of sin and the heir of death now, as he would have been, if Christ had never expired. All that the atonement has effect-



ed for the sinner, is to place him within the reach of pardon,—to make it consistent with the perfections of God to have mercy on whom he will have mercy. But the unbeliever, continuing such, must perish. Even the blood of Christ cannot save him while under the damning sin of unbelief, rejecting that blood! The sentiments advanced and supported in the preceding discourse, will enable us likewise, to reconcile *full atonement* with *free grace*.

The opposers of the doctrine of the atonement, have often objected to what they consider a palpable absurdity in that system which teaches, that God first required an ample satisfaction for sin, and then claims the honor of bestowing a free and unmerited pardon on the penitent and believing transgressor. They say, that this doctrine represents God as executing the whole penalty of the law upon a substitute, till justice is satisfied,—till the law has no farther demands,—and that he then takes to himself the credit of releasing those from punishment, on the principles of grace, whom the law could not, in these circumstances, justly condemn. On this point hear Dr. Priestley, the great champion of Socinianism. The following is his objection to the doctrine of the atonement. “We read in the scriptures, that we are justified freely by the grace of God. But what free grace, or mercy, does there appear to have been in God, if Christ gave a full price for our justification, and bore the infinite weight of divine wrath on our account? We are commanded to forgive others, as we ourselves hope to be forgiven; and to be merciful as our Father, who is in heaven, is merciful. But surely we are not thereby authorized to insist upon any atonement or satisfaction, before we give up our

resentments towards an offending penitent brother. Indeed, how could it deserve the name of forgiveness if we did? It is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, with the doctrine of free grace, which, according to the universal tenor of the scriptures, is so fully displayed in the pardon of sin, and the justification of sinners. It is only from the literal interpretation of a few figurative expressions in the scriptures, that this doctrine of atonement, as well as that of transubstantiation, has been derived; and it is certainly a doctrine highly injurious to God; and if we who are commanded to imitate God, should act upon the maxims of it, it would be subversive of the most amiable part of virtue in men. We should be implacable and unmerciful, insisting upon the uttermost farthing."

Thus far the Doctor. How learned—and how blind! It needs but little discernment to see, that the objections here urged, have no application to the doctrine of the atonement as it has been stated and defended in this treatise. They fail of their mark, and utterly fall to the ground. They apply exclusively to that system which represents the atonement under the literal notion of repairing damages, or paying a debt; and this view of the subject is utterly disclaimed in this work. If the legal demand against the sinner was literally and fully cancelled by Christ, it is frankly conceded, that there would be no grace in his subsequent justification. Forgiveness could have no place in the gospel system.

But if we consider the atonement as required by the moral governor, not for the purpose of taking away the demerit of sin, but for the purpose of rendering the pardon of sin admissible; if we look upon this great

transaction as intended, not to incline God to the feelings or exercise of mercy, but as intended to save his authority and government from prostration, and his compassion from becoming a real curse to the universe ; if we consider the blood of Christ, not as extinguishing the sinner's individual debt, but as rendering such a satisfaction to the general or public justice of God as would make him "a terror to evil doers" while he forgives and saves the guilty,—then the charge of Dr. Priestley, that "it is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, with the doctrine of free grace," and his insinuation, that the atonement represents God as "implacable and unmerciful, insisting upon the uttermost farthing," is inadmissible, and totally unfounded in matter of fact ! The atonement we hold, is, in every sense, consistent with free grace.

The Doctor's parallel between the forgiveness of God, and our duty to forgive one another, is more plausible than solid. His argument, when stripped of its imposing drapery, is this,—we are required to forgive one another without an atonement, and therefore God must have forgiven sinners without an atonement. This reasoning contains, as we shall be able to show, two fundamental errors.

The *first* error is this : there is no distinction here made between a public and a private character ; between God as the moral governor of the universe, and man in his individual moral capacity. The atonement was not required in order to produce a change in the divine feelings, but it was required in order to remove difficulties of a public nature which stood in the way of the sinner's pardon. And a civil governor, or any other

man who sustains public responsibilities, may act in the same way, and not subject himself to the charge of being "implacable and unmerciful, and insisting upon the uttermost farthing." A criminal, for instance, may receive a real pardon, and yet this pardon may be founded on some consideration which, in this instance, will sustain the government in this act of mercy : and aside from this consideration, clemency might have been a crime rather than a duty.

But the *second* error is greater than the first. It consists in confounding the atonement with the legal punishment which the crime deserved. Such a satisfaction, and forgiveness could not co-exist. But this point has been thoroughly discussed both in this and the previous chapter.

As to the insinuation, that the doctrine of the atonement, and of transubstantiation rest upon the same basis, it more resembles the sneer of the infidel, than the declaration of a candid christian.—There is a disingenuousness in this remark, which we have rarely witnessed in any man who was not either grossly ignorant, or essentially wanting in self-respect. As to transubstantiation, it is well known to rest upon the alleged but falsely literal construction of a single figurative expression ; while the atonement is a web running through the whole of the Old and the New Testament scriptures. The whole typical economy of Moses—and every page of the gospel, point directly to this important doctrine. So much for the candor of a man who places all religion in liberality of sentiment ! His people too are all full of charity—for every thing but the truth !

Now we cheerfully confess that this objection would

be valid, if the atonement were to be considered as a satisfaction to commutative justice, or in the nature of the payment of a debt. In this case to cancel the demand, is to annihilate every thing like grace or favor in the discharge. The objection, that there would be no grace in the sinner's release would be equally well founded if the atonement had rendered full and literal satisfaction to the claims of distributive justice. If the penalty of the law was once inflicted, what more could that law demand? It has but one penalty. If Christ suffered precisely what the law had threatened against an individual sinner, then it would be wrong to inflict the same punishment upon that sinner. And if it would be wrong to punish him, then there must be an obligation on the part of God to release him; and, in this case, there could be no grace in his discharge, or exemption from punishment. Pardon or forgiveness, supposes that the creature is guilty, and that the law might justly punish him.

But when we consider, that the atonement includes no such satisfaction as is here contemplated, the objection will vanish. The atonement paid no debt,—it involved the infliction of no penalty. It was a substitute for the curse which was due to the sinner; it merely prepared the way for the proclamation of mercy to rebels, and the extension of actual pardon to every believer in Christ Jesus.

With this idea of atonement, free grace is perfectly consistent. If the debt were paid, or the penalty of the law exhausted, then the sinner's release would be by law and not by grace. But if the atonement merely rendered pardon compatible with the glory of God and the public good—if it did not require, but merely per-



mitted God to extend forgiveness to sinners—then full atonement and free grace may go hand in hand. And thus it is represented in the scriptures. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.” The price of redemption was the blood of Christ ; but this merely opened the channels into which are poured the streams of rich and abundant mercy.

*Finally*, the view which has been taken, in this discussion, of the nature of the atonement, will go very far towards settling the question in regard to *its extent*. A full examination of this point, which is here appended as an inference from the foregoing trains of thought, will form the subject matter of the succeeding chapter. But it may not be improper to glance at it, in this place, as it stands connected with the principles already established. The whole question respecting limited or general atonement, is settled by the notions which we entertain of its intrinsic nature. If the atonement consisted in Christ’s suffering the exact amount of misery due to all those who will be saved, if it were a transaction regulated by the principles of commercial justice, then we might, with propriety, talk of its being limited to the elect.—In this case the sufferings of the mediator must have been measured out according to the number of individuals who were to be saved. But if the atonement consists, not in cancelling the demand for *one* man or *all* men, but in opening the door of hope,—in rendering the pardon of sinners consistent with the character, law and universe of God,—then the question of extent is settled at once. There can be no limitation in the case ; for the same sufferings which would vindicate the divine character in offering or ex-



tending salvation to *one*, would equally vindicate the divine character in offering or extending salvation to *many*—leaving, as this system does, the disposal of pardon and eternal life at the sovereign option of Jehovah.—This does away the common objection against a general provision, that there is a loss to the universe, if Christ died for *all*, and a *part* only are saved. This objection goes upon the supposition, that the atonement is the payment of a debt ; and if the debt was paid for all, and a part only shall be released—then there is a loss of treasure or a sacrifice of funds. This representation of the case has been already proved to be mistaken and inadmissible.

And thus the system of the gospel ever where either explicitly or virtually acknowledges the general character of the atonement. The invitations of the gospel are to all ; the Bible every where testifies, that there is provision enough and to spare ; sinners are blamed and upbraided for rejecting the atonement ; a more aggravated condemnation is represented as awaiting those who perish under the gospel, than those who perish under the simple operation of the law ; and unbelief, and not the limitation of the atonement, is every where, in the inspired volume, declared to be the cause why sinners die. What an amazing responsibility does the gospel of Jesus Christ impose ? If the despisers of law die without mercy, there will surely be no excuse for the despisers and rejecters of proffered grace ! Here are claims which make new and thrilling appeals,—claims which fasten directly upon the heart and conscience,—claims ratified and sealed in blood,—and these claims ought to be pressed by every herald of the cross, and felt by every dying man. To preach

more, and more copiously, on the offers of the gospel, is a desideratum in the profection and improvement of the christian ministry. To understand them in their nature and relations, to elucidate them to men, to show the condescension and sincerity of God in them and the necessity of accepting them, were this more largely and competently done in the official ministrations of the church of God, how great the good that might be expected in the salvation of men !

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

HAVING already considered the necessity, the reality, and the nature of the atonement, the way is now prepared to enter on an examination of its EXTENT. Two opinions have prevailed, and do still prevail, in the Christian Church, in relation to this important point; and it is the object of the present inquiry to ascertain, if possible, the real state of the case, in relation to these conflicting opinions, as presented in the oracles of the living God. Before we proceed to the merits of the question, it is proper to have a clear and distinct apprehension of its import.—The point now to be settled is, whether Christ died to make an atonement for the sins of *the elect alone*, or those who will finally be saved, or whether his sacrifice is *general and ample*, opening the door of mercy to our sinful race.

It is readily perceived, that the principles defended in the last chapter, in relation to the nature of this satisfaction, must have an intimate connection with this point. If the atonement is to be considered as the literal payment of a debt, or, in other words, if it con-

sisted in suffering the exact penalty of the law, in the room of those who will be saved, it is manifest, that it must be limited in its extent. In this case it would be a provision which must be regulated according to the principles of commutative justice. If *one* soul were to be saved by the atonement, Christ must sustain an amount of suffering equal to that involved in the eternal condemnation of that one soul ; and if a *thousand* were to be saved, Christ must suffer a thousand times that amount, and in the same proportion for any greater number who are to be rescued from perdition and exalted to glory. To this scheme there are insurmountable objections. The most important of these have been already stated, and others very naturally suggest themselves in this place. Such a view of the sufferings of Christ apportioning them exactly and definitively to the number of those who will be saved, is no where sanctioned or so much as hinted at in the Bible. It would seem too that Christ could not, in this sense, have atoned for the sins of men ; for notwithstanding his divinity, his human nature was alone susceptible of suffering. Now as a single sin deserved eternal misery, which certainly implies infinite suffering—we cannot see how every sin of all the redeemed could have been expiated, in a few short hours, by the agonies endured by the human nature of Christ, though this nature was united to the Godhead. Jesus Christ could not have made an adequate atonement—if this atonement implied, that he must endure sufferings equal in quantum to the eternal damnation of all those who will finally be saved. This point can be made clear. The Godhead could not suffer ; and while the passion of Jesus Christ on the cross was, no doubt,

greatly increased in dignity by the union of his human nature with the divine, it was, nevertheless, humanity alone that suffered. This humanity, however elevated, was finite,—and no finite being could, in a limited time, endure the infliction of an infinite penalty. There are but two ways in which an infinite penalty, or, which is the same thing, an infinite amount of natural evil, can be endured by any being. One is, the sufferer may be finite, and the duration infinite; the other, the sufferer may be infinite, and the duration finite. The lost sinner, in the unwasting ages of eternity, will suffer such a penalty, or endure such an amount of natural evil; and Jesus Christ might have suffered an equal penalty, or have endured an equal amount of evil, in a few hours of agony on the cross, if the divine nature had actually suffered with the human. But as the sufferings of Christ, as God, will not be maintained by any, the argument on this point is decisive:—Jesus Christ did not sustain the full amount of wrath which would have been, to all eternity, inflicted on all those who will be saved by his death.

On the other hand, if the atonement consisted, as has been shown in the former chapter, in the infliction of such sufferings upon the Lord Jesus Christ as would amply vindicate the divine character, and sustain the government of God, in the salvation of sinners, then an atonement sufficient for one, would be an atonement sufficient for all. If, in one word, this atonement merely opened the door of mercy—if it prepared the way for the offer and the *exercise* of pardon, then it must go upon the broad ground, and limitation is out of the question.

But there is another kind of testimony in favor of

a general atonement, which remains to be exhibited ; testimony which the plainest christian can comprehend, which is either drawn from the express declarations of the scriptures, or founded on the obvious and acknowledged principles of the gospel. That the atonement made by Jesus Christ is general in its character, may be fully established by the following considerations.

The invitations or offers of the gospel, are made indiscriminately to all. This declaration, it is presumed, will not be denied or doubted by those who are well acquainted with their bibles.—Such passages as the following speak the largeness and freedom of the gospel call. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”—“Repent ye, and believe the gospel.”—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The declaration, made to those who were invited to the feast of salvation in the parable, was, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner ; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready ; come unto the marriage.” And those who were thus invited to come and partake of the entertainment already prepared for them, are the identical persons who “made light of it, and went their ways,” and were eventually destroyed for their contempt and rejection of the call. This was a practical illustration of the principle which is stated at the close of the parable—“Many are called, but few are chosen.” That is, many are invited to the gospel feast who never come—many enjoy the free and gracious offer of all those blessings which are connected with the atonement, but continuing to reject this offer, they give evidence that they belong not to the number of God’s chosen and peculiar people, and they necessitate their own destruction.



In support of the declaration, that the invitations of the gospel are made to all, we might transcribe page after page of the bible. Upon this fact depends the whole business of preaching the gospel. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—"The spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

But it is granted by many, that the calls of the gospel are made indiscriminately to sinners, and yet it is contended that the atonement is limited to a definite number in its extent. A few plain questions, may place this business at rest. Upon what are the calls and invitations of the gospel founded? The answer is, upon the atonement; since if this atonement had never been made by Jesus Christ, there could have been no offer of mercy to apostate man. The atonement is the foundation and the offer is the superstructure; and we may with propriety ask, on what principle the latter can be greater than the former! We propose another question. Are sinners under obligations to hear and obey the gospel call? We mean are *all* men under obligations to hear and obey? If not, there is no sin committed in rejecting Christ and his salvation. But if all who hear the declarations of mercy as stated in the gospel, are under obligations to look to Christ for salvation; to repent and believe the gospel; to come to the marriage feast—then one of two things must be true. There must be a general provision made for them in the atonement, or some are under obligations to do that which would be of no avail to them even in case of their compliance. They are commanded, and

are under obligations to look to Jesus Christ for salvation, and yet Jesus Christ never lived or died to open the door for their recovery—they are commanded, and are under obligations to repent, and believe the gospel, when, at the same time, this gospel has made no preparation for their return to God—they are commanded, and are under obligations to come, and partake of the marriage-feast, when in all the munificence of this entertainment there is not one particle of provision made for them. There need be no hesitation in saying that, in these cases, moral obligation cannot exist; and, upon these principles, moral obligation can never be enforced. This is rearing a structure without a foundation; an edifice without a corner-stone.

In addition to all this, men are expressly upbraided and condemned for not complying with the gospel offer, or for not becoming interested in the atonement made by Jesus Christ.

“This is the condemnation,” says our Savior, “that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” On another occasion, “began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.” Of the stubborn and unbelieving Jews he complained in these terms, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.” Should it be said, in relation to these passages, that they rather reprove men for resisting the miracles and instructions of Christ, than for rejecting the atonement, we reply, that the miracles and instructions of Christ, were the means of benefit and salvation to sinners only as they were connected with the sacrifice which he offered for their redemption; and the rejection of the one, implied the rejection of the other.

But that sinners are under obligations to embrace the gospel, and are guilty in the sight of God for rejecting its provisions—may be established beyond the possibility of evasion, from the parable of the marriage feast.—Certain persons were invited to this entertainment upon the strength of the provision which was in readiness; and they made light of it and would not come. For this act they were not only blamed, but condemned and punished. “When the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.” In the parallel parable, in another Evangelist, it is said, “None of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper.” It is a given point, that these men who refused to come to the feast, represent those persons who finally perish. Now the question is, was there, or was there not, an atonement, or provision made for such in the gospel of Christ? Those who hold to a limited atonement say that there was not—but to us it appears abundantly evident, from the parable, that there was. It is so asserted in the invitation. “All things are ready; come unto the marriage.” And again, “Come, for all things are now ready.” If it be a fact, that the atonement is limited to that particular number who will come to the gospel feast and be saved, then this invitation was not founded in truth. There is no basis to support it. If it resembles the rainbow in its circular magnificence, it is like it more as insubstantial and stationed on nothing. For these persons, there was nothing ready; for them there was no provision made. The punishment too inflicted upon these persons tells us, that there was an entertainment made for them—or in other words, provision for

their salvation. Why were they doomed never to taste of the supper, and why were they given up to the devastations of fire and sword? It was because they refused to come and partake of a certain feast which they were assured was provided for them. Now if there was no such provision in this feast, then they are condemned and punished for rejecting and despising that which never existed in relation to themselves.—They are condemned and punished for not partaking of an entertainment which was made for others, and not for them. Such a representation as this—with reverence be it spoken—is a libel upon the character of Jehovah! The argument drawn from this parable in favor of a general atonement, is as clear as the light of meridian day—the conclusion, is incontrovertible as the positions of eternal truth. It is best seen like the sun, in its own light.

But this is not all. Rejecters of the gospel are every where represented, in the Bible, as more miserable in the future world, than those who have sinned only against the law.

If this declaration be true, it speaks, in strong and decided language, in favor of a general atonement. The inquiry will first respect the fact, and then its application to the point in hand.

That the despisers of Jesus Christ and his salvation will perish, with an aggravated destruction—a destruction enhanced by the consideration that they have had a price put into their hands to get wisdom, but have had no heart to improve it—is manifest from the whole tenor of the gospel. This sentiment is implied in several of the scriptures which have been quoted under the former heads of the present discourse. It is strongly

intimated in the parable of the supper ; and is more directly and distinctly taught in other parts of the bible. Of Capernaum our Savior declared, " I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee."—" But those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."—" Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."—" He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith HE was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace ?"

Now it may be asked, why the doom of Capernaum will be more intolerable in the day of judgment, than that of Sodom—unless it is, because Capernaum was favored with gospel privileges which Sodom never enjoyed, privileges which ought to have made her better, privileges which she was bound to improve to her salvation ? But what is the gospel without the atonement ? If Capernaum was more guilty, and will be ultimately more miserable, for rejecting the gospel, than those are, or can be, who are not chargeable with this sin—then Capernaum was under obligations to embrace Christ, and be saved by his merits ; and if under obligations to embrace Christ and be saved by his merits, then the atonement must have been offered to Capernaum on the same terms on which it is offered to others. To suppose that God would offer that to his creatures which has no existence—and then punish them for not embracing it, is to charge him with insincerity

and duplicity and empty show. Why will the enemies of Christ be brought forth in the day of judgment, and be slain before him? The crime alleged against them, and for which they are especially punished is an unwillingness to submit to his mediatorial reign; that is, an unwillingness to embrace the atonement and welcome his salvation. Does not this imply, that the atonement might have reached their case? Why will it be said to some, hereafter, "behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish"—unless it is, that an atonement has actually been offered to them, and that this atonement which was offered as an adequate ground for their personal and identical salvation, was a reality and not a deception? Why does a "sorer punishment" await the despiser of the gospel, than the transgressor of the law? It is because he has "trodden under foot the Son of God." He was under obligations to receive him as the atoning victim—as the propitiation for sin—as the all sufficient Savior. For not doing this, he is now condemned; and if this sentence of condemnation is just, then Christ was offered to him before he could be trodden under foot; and he must have made an atonement for this very character before he could be sincerely offered. To deny these conclusions, is to set scripture, and logic, and common sense, at defiance—for the sake of a theory!

Let it not be forgotten, by the honest inquirer after truth, that unbelief, and not the limitation of the atonement, is EVERY WHERE represented in the Holy Scriptures, as the reason why sinners, under the administration of gospel truth, finally perish. Here it may be proper to call to mind the representations which we have before given of the nature of that propitiation



made by Jesus Christ. The atonement does not of itself save a single soul. It barely opens the door for the accomplishment of this object by free and sovereign grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith." Hence the importance attached to faith in the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel. It is by this exercise, that we receive the atonement, and rest upon it for justification and eternal life. "He that believeth"—not he that is atoned for, "shall be saved,"—and "he that believeth not"—not he that has no atonement made for him, "shall be damned." Now this scheme lays the blame of the sinner's condemnation where it ought to lie, upon his unbelief, and not upon the plan of God.—And so it is every where represented in the gospel. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Why are sinners condemned under the operation of the gospel of Christ? It is because they have "not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." It is not, in any sense to be ascribed to a deficiency in the atonement. But in order to agree with the limited scheme, the declaration ought to read, the non-elect or reprobates are "condemned already," and must finally perish, because they have no provision made for them in the atonement of "the only begotten Son of God." But we have not so learned the gospel of Christ. Take one declaration more of the same character. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Some of those Jews whom Christ addressed, would finally perish—not because his blood could not avail in their behalf, but because they would continue to reject this only way of reconciliation appointed by the Father. "If ye believe not,"

is the declaration of the Son of God. The whole stress is laid on *not* BELIEVING.

And in the day of judgment, the rejection, and not the want of the atonement, will be the ground upon which the final and decisive sentence will be passed. At least this will be the case so far as men have enjoyed the light, and received the instructions of the gospel. Under the operation of that system of eternal love introduced by Jesus Christ, unbelief, and unbelief alone, closes the gates of heaven, and opens the door of the eternal pit, and rivets the chains of reprobation fast upon the soul of the sinner. The whole world may be safely challenged to show *in the Bible* any other representation of this matter. There is a settled uniformity in the language of inspiration, on this point. Sinners die, not because there has been no Savior provided for them,—not because he has not atoned for their sins,—not because this atonement has not been offered to them, and urged upon them,—not because Jesus Christ is indifferent to their eternal welfare; but because they deliberately and perseveringly reject the proffered grace, and thus make the bands of death strong upon themselves.

But the scriptures expressly teach, that the atonement is general and unrestricted in its nature. A few passages contained in the Bible, selected from many bearing on this point, will here be presented and examined. The apostle John, in his first Epistle tells us, that “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” This language is very clear and very emphatic. He has atoned for the sins of “THE WHOLE WORLD.” This phrase, “the whole world” is by the opponents of the

doctrine of an unrestricted and universal atonement, limited to the elect, or those who will ultimately share in its benefits. But this is a mere assumption which would appear to be made simply for the purpose of sustaining a favorite theory. It involves a manifest departure from the just and obvious principles of biblical exposition. "The world," or what is still more expressive, "the whole world," is here contrasted with the church, or the collective body of believers; and in this connection it can mean nothing else than the whole body of unbelievers—without any reference to election in any possible shape. We say the contrast here is between believers and unbelievers, and not between believers and the elect. The import of the declaration is this:—Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of believers; and not only so, but for the sins of all unbelievers too.

When John the Baptist pointed his inquiring countrymen to Jesus Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It is easy to say, as in the former case, that the term "world" here means the elect; but this is a mere gratuity, and is unsupported by the Bible. It is a correct principle of exposition, that a term should be taken in its ordinary and most simple acceptance, unless the context, or some unequivocal declaration of the spirit of God elsewhere recorded, may render a different construction necessary. Had John the Baptist intended to teach the doctrine of a limited atonement, he would probably have pointed to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the church or of his chosen people.

The apostle Paul, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, assumes the doctrine of a general atonement as

a given point ; and, from the universality of the propitiation, argues the universality of human depravity. "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." A remark or two will give this passage an important bearing on the point in hand. Let it be asked, who are the subjects of spiritual death ? The answer must be, all mankind. If we push the inquiry one step farther, and ask, for whom did Christ die ? The answer must be, according to this passage, for all those who are the subjects of spiritual death ; that is, for all mankind. "If one died for all, then were all dead," or (in the original) "then all died." And the proposition is equally true, though stated in a different order. If all mankind were dead in trespasses and sins, then Jesus Christ died for them all.

In his first Epistle to Timothy, this same apostle tells us, that Christ "gave himself a ransom for all." This declaration, if critically examined, will furnish a conclusive argument in favor of a general atonement. (See 1. Tim. 2: 1—6,) The apostle exhorts, that supplications, &c. "be made for all men : for kings, and for all that are in authority." He urges this duty of praying for all men upon two different grounds,—the benevolence of God who is willing that all men should be saved, and the atonement made by Christ who gave himself a ransom for all. Now we are here directed to pray "for all men"—that is, for all mankind. This, we presume, will not be denied. And is it not equally true, that God is willing that all men who are the subjects of these supplications, should be saved ? Or does he command all men to believe and be saved, and at the same time, is unwilling that some should obey his own express injunction ? This can hardly be admitted.

And if christians are to pray for all men, and God is willing that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, do not these supplications of the christian, and this benevolent feeling of God respecting the salvation of all men, grow out of the ransom which Christ has offered "for all"? If we limit the term "all," in this last case, to the elect, then the apostle's argument will stand thus. Christ gave himself a ransom for all the elect, and consequently God is willing that all the elect should be saved ; and, therefore, christians ought to pray for all mankind. This reasoning does not hold together. *The legs of the lame are not equal.* The inference is too broad for the premises. The proper conclusion from these premises, thus gratuitously assumed, would be, that we ought to pray only for the elect ; for the same reason which would lead us to restrict the term "all," in two instances, would lead us to restrict it in the third. If the apostle reasons correctly in this passage, he does insist upon the propriety of praying for all mankind from the universal benevolence of God, and the universality of the ransom offered by Jesus Christ.

We are conducted to the same conclusion by another verse of this paragraph. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The mediatorial work of Christ is here represented as carried on between "God and men." These are the parties. God stands upon one side of the great question which Christ has undertaken to bring to issue, and "men,"—that is mankind, or the human race, on the other. In prosecuting his work as mediator, he has given "himself a ransom" to one of these parties for the other ; that is, a ransom to God for men—for

*all* men—for the offending race without exception. There is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.” The connection between ἀνθρώπων, *men*, in the fifth verse, and πάντων, *all*, in the sixth verse, justifies the construction which we have given above. The ransom was given for that whole offending party between whom and God, the work of mediation was conducted by Jesus Christ.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle tells us that Jesus Christ “was made a little lower than the angels—that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” The expression “was made a little lower than the angels”—is only a circumlocution employed to assert the fact, that Christ became man; and the apostle was led to adopt this phraseology from what he had said of the original condition of the human race, in the context. He became man, that he might taste death for man—“for every man”—for mankind without distinction. He became himself partaker of human nature, “that he by the grace of God should taste death, ὑπὲρ παντός”—for each and every part of human nature.

The apostle Peter speaks of certain false teachers who “bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” Who these are, it is not necessary to the present argument to determine. It is sufficient for our purpose to know that they perish, and are, at the same time, persons who were bought with the blood of Christ. This passage furnishes perfect demonstration, that the atonement made by Christ and the actual redemption of sinners are not commensurate, or of equal extent. Some are “bought” by the Lord



himself, who, for their adherence to sin, are overwhelmed with "swift destruction." They were atoned for, and yet are lost. An attempt has been made to set aside this conclusion by denying, that there is any reference here to the atonement which has been made for sinners. It is asserted that the word *δεσπότην*, which is here translated Lord, is never applied to Jesus Christ in the Bible. But this is not altogether certain. In Rev. vi. 10. the same word is applied either to the Father or the Son; and Macknight is inclined to favor the opinion, that it is applied to the latter. Be this, however, as it may, it can have but little influence upon the present question. The word may be employed to denote the Son with the same propriety with which it is employed to denote the Father; and were the passage quoted from Peter the only one in which it was used to designate the Lord Jesus Christ, this fact would by no means invalidate the argument. As it is a word applicable to the Godhead, the context must determine which Person it is intended, in any particular instance, to denote. Jesus Christ is the Lord or Master to whom these "false teachers" professed subjection; and he is that being who has "bought" sinners with his blood. And some who were thus bought, will, by "denying the Lord," "bring upon themselves swift destruction." It appears then, that some persons are atoned for who will finally perish. See the views of Calvin on this passage, in the introductory chapter of this work. The manner in which the advocates of limited atonement dispose of this passage, is by no means satisfactory.

One passage more, and only one, will be adduced in favor of general atonement. It is the declaration of

Christ himself.—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The advocates of a limited atonement, have had great trouble with this text. As usual, “the world” here must be made to signify the elect. To say nothing of this arbitrary and unnatural construction, this reading will not very well agree with what immediately follows. “God so loved the”—ELECT, (that is those who will finally believe, and who shall not perish, but have everlasting life,) “that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever,” of all this number, “believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—Now, this is putting absurdity into the lips of infinite wisdom. It is inditing poor rhetoric and bad logic for the Holy Spirit. But take the passage just as it stands, and its truth and simplicity are apparent. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” to die for this world, “that whosoever” of all this world which God loved and for which the Savior died, “believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

There are other declarations of the Bible on which great stress is laid by those who maintain the doctrine of a limited atonement, and which are considered by many as settling the question in its favor. The following are of this class. “The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”—“feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood”—“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Upon these scriptures it is obvious to remark, that not one of them is contradicted by the doctrine of a general atonement, because they do not assert, that

the good Shepherd gave "his life for the sheep," and for them alone; or that the church was exclusively loved and purchased. This construction would contradict other parts of the inspired volume. If Jesus Christ tasted death "for every man," he did of course lay down "his life for the sheep"—and if he gave himself a "ransom for all," he certainly did give himself, at the same time, a ransom for "the church." It is readily admitted by those who maintain the universality, or the general character of the atonement, that the individuals intended in the collective terms, "sheep" and "the church of God," are the only persons who are effectually benefited by the propitiation made by Jesus Christ. They alone rest upon it, and are grateful for it. Its full effect, or design, is accomplished in them; and hence there is a peculiar force and emphasis in the declarations cited above. But in all these declarations, there is no denial of a general provision,—no intimation, that Jesus Christ did not so die for *all* men, as to remove every *legal* obstruction to their salvation.

A few important truths may be appended, by way of inference, to the present discussion. One is, that a limited atonement would be an impeachment of the divine character.

Compare, for a moment, the different and various aspects of a limited atonement with the plain declarations of the bible and the acknowledged principles of the gospel, which have been stated in this chapter. It has been clearly proved, that the call of the gospel, which includes an obligation to believe in Christ, and to rest on him for eternal life, is made to all without distinction, to a world of sinners. And what can sup-

port a general offer, unless it be a general provision? Does it correspond with that truth and sincerity which belong to God, in an infinite degree, to proffer to his creatures,—nay to urge and press upon his creatures, that which never had an existence? And yet this God is represented as doing, if the call of the gospel is universal, and the atonement made by Christ, is, at the same time, partial or limited. This view of the atonement does represent God as offering more to sinners than was ever provided by his Son, and presented in the gospel. But the objection goes much farther than this. Sinners are expressly condemned for not becoming interested in that atonement or provision which is offered; and yet for them, on the limited scheme, no such atonement or provision was ever made. And this is not all. These rejecters of the gospel and despisers of the atonement, must feel the effects of their conduct to all eternity. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for them. But why? What have they done? According to the principles of those who limit the atonement, they have rejected a certain provision which was never offered to them; or, if offered, which was never made; which was restricted to others while they were expressly excluded; which could not, from the very nature of its stipulations, include them and supply their necessities, even if they had complied with the invitation and obeyed the command. In addition to all this, they are every where assured, in the sacred volume, that their ruin is altogether attributable to themselves. Unbelief is represented, under the administration of the gospel, as the great damning sin. And yet if the atonement is partial and limited, unbelief is inevitable. It must take place by a physical

necessity, for there is no foundation for faith. Its exercise, for the want of which the sinner is condemned, would imply a natural impossibility. Indeed, for God to require the sinner, for whom no atonement has been made, to believe in the atonement, and to rely upon this atonement for his personal salvation, is to require him to believe what is not true. There is no hazard in saying, that the God of the bible has never required any such thing. On the theory of the limitarian, no atonement was ever made for those who reject it, and finally perish. To believe there was, would be to believe a false statement or position; and yet for the want of this belief he must endure a more accumulated and dreadful weight of divine wrath than would have been inflicted under the law. Here is a course of reasoning never adopted in any parallel case. Here is a direct impeachment of the character of Jehovah. It is surely high time, that christians should thoroughly understand, and correctly apply the great principles of revelation to the investigation of this subject. It is the truth alone that can roll away the reproach which has often assailed the divine government on this point.

In the above nothing has been said of the express contradiction between the scheme of a limited atonement and the plain declarations of the Bible. The restrictive system says, that Christ is "the propitiation" for the sins of the elect, and for theirs alone; the apostle John teaches us, that he is likewise the propitiation "for the sins of the whole world." This system declares, that Christ "gave himself" for the church alone; the apostle Paul tells us, that he "gave himself a ransom for all." The scheme which is here controverted teaches, that Christ died for a part only of

the human race ; the Bible expressly declares, that he “died for all”—that he tasted “death for every man.” This human theory would have us believe, that atonement and salvation are equally broad ; but the inspired volume affirms, that some deny “the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

The preceding inquiry leads us to the contemplation of the great purposes to be answered by a general atonement. It is sometimes said that no great object can be obtained by a general atonement, if, after all, but a part of mankind participate the saving benefit. But this objection is founded on an imperfect and limited view of the subject. If the atonement is what it has been represented to be, in this treatise, a preliminary to the offer of pardon and peace ; if it contains such a provision for sinners in general as to lay them under obligations to believe in Christ, and turn to God and live ; if it has furnished a new set of motives which ought to affect the hearts and conduct of men, as moral beings ; if it proposes the terms of eternal life, for the reception or rejection of which we must render an account, and the consequences of which we must feel while eternity endures,—then it is obvious, that the most important results are connected with such a provision. As it respects God, it is an exhibition of his benevolence, and as it respects man, it opens the door for his return to the friendship and service of his Maker. At all events, it must and will reveal to the universe the moral temper of the sinner’s heart, and show what he deserves, by exhibiting the circumstances in which he goes down to ruin !

By the moral law, the whole human race must stand condemned at the bar of God. Under this system there



could be no escape. Despair and death would look every sinner in the face. Instead of executing this law upon us, God has "found a ransom." He has placed us once more, as it were, in reach of heaven. The door is thrown wide open before us. The terms, as founded upon the atonement, are, "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—This system will fully vindicate the divine character from every charge of cruelty in the death of the sinner. Not a shadow of reproach can rest on it. On the broad basis of a general provision, God may proclaim through heaven, and earth, and his illimitable universe, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Does the reader of this declaration believe, that such a rich and munificent provision has been made for the dying outcasts of our world? Oh! let him recollect, that the very fact of such an atonement, should make him solemn even to fearfulness and trembling. Every expectant of eternity should feel his own personal relations to this great gospel fact. It will prepare for every individual to whom its offers are made, a starry crown in heaven, or kindle for him a fiercer flame below! How full of interest,—how fearful is the fact, that Christ has died for sinners! This fact creates a responsibility on the part of every hearer of the gospel, from which there is no escape. Life or death is the certain consequence.

One thought more, and this great theme shall be dismissed. The views of the atonement here presented, throw much light on certain passages of scripture which are sometimes quoted in favor of universal salvation. We must carefully and critically distinguish between atonement and actual redemption; between

the provision made on the part of Christ, and its cordial reception on the part of the sinner. The atonement prepares the way for man's return to God; the application of this atonement, or its reception on the part of the sinner, actually brings him back, and secures to him, in the covenant of grace, a title to the heavenly inheritance. The doctrine of general atonement, if properly understood, has no connection with universal salvation. There is no more connection between them, than there was between the ample and extensive entertainment mentioned in the parable, and the refreshment of those who utterly refused to come to the feast. Of what avail to them was the munificence of the marriage supper, when they preferred, and continued to prefer their own personal employments and pleasures? While "they made light" of the invitation, and went one to his farm and another to his merchandise, that feast could do them no good. It could afford them neither pleasure nor profit. Indeed it left them, in a very material point, worse than it found them. It brought them under the responsibilities created by a kind and gracious invitation,—and eventually fixed upon them the guilt of its pertinacious and wanton rejection.

And so it is with the atonement made by Christ. It is sufficient for all; but it will no more save those who refuse to embrace it, than a sumptuous feast will satisfy the hunger of those who refuse to partake of the proffered bounty. General atonement furnishes a consistent ground for the publication of the glad tidings of the gospel. An atonement for all, will justify and sustain the offer of salvation to all. The result will be directed by the wise providence, and the sovereign

grace of God. The final consequence will be a sentence of acquittal to the believer, and of condemnation upon the unbeliever.

Those who have contended, that the salvation of all men, would follow as a consequence from the doctrine of a general provision in the atonement, have uniformly entertained incorrect notions respecting the nature of this transaction. They have looked upon this whole affair as regulated by the principles of commutative justice. If it were the province of the atonement to repeal the curse, and liberate the sinner from all legal obligation, then, it would be readily acknowledged, that a general satisfaction must be followed by a general redemption of the human race. But the preceding examination of this subject has proved, that such an inference is unauthorized and untrue, and the whole system built on it, is unsound. By students of the Bible,—by thinking men,—by logical minds,—by those who endeavor carefully to trace out the beautiful and harmonious connections of philosophy and religion, it must and will be yielded as untenable. An atonement which cancels guilt, and annihilates responsibility, has never been made. Such an atonement, with reverence be it said, could not have been devised. Of such a provision, the Bible breathes not a whisper. There is an atonement which permits God, in perfect consistency with all the perfections of his nature and with all the important ends of law and government, to offer salvation to a guilty and expiring world. This same atonement lays the sinner who hears the gospel, under obligations to return to God ; and, under the mediatorial system, his eternal destiny is suspended on his acceptance or rejection of the offered mercy. As to the

believer, his sins are freely pardoned through the blood of Christ, and the Almighty arms surround, sustain and guard him. As to the unbeliever, continuing such, no atonement can reach his case. The blood of the new covenant he treads on in disdain. He lets go of the only anchor of safety,—he extinguishes the last glimmering ray of hope. In one word, he rejects the Son of God, and, by this act, fixes the broad seal of reprobation upon his own soul. The law justly condemns him,—but a rejected gospel will more clearly reveal the enmity of his heart against God, and finally assign him a deeper and a darker place in the world of hopeless ruin.

These distinctions will enable us to comprehend and explain those passages of scripture, connected with the atonement, which are frequently perverted, and pressed into the cause of universal salvation. The following declarations are of this character:—That Christ “died for all,”—that he tasted “death for every man,”—that he “taketh away the sin of the world,”—and that “by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” These scriptures define the atonement, and not its effect. They declare the extent of the provision, and not the extent of salvation. The atonement made by Christ, and its acceptance on the part of the sinner, are entirely distinct and separate acts. Some for whom the Son of God expired, and to whom his salvation was freely offered, will behold, and wonder, and perish. The blood of Christ, though shed for sinners, cannot, without its application to the heart, take away their guilt; and this blood, it should be remembered, has not extinguished the fires of hell. It remains an eternal truth,

that the impenitent must perish,—that the unbeliever must be damned. “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

THE END.







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